



Lineage of Diamond Light

Crystal Mirror Series, Volume V

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CRYSTAL MIRROR SERIES

1. *Nyingma Transmission to the West*
2. *Introduction to the Nyingma Lineage*
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6. *The Three Jewels and History of Dharma Transmission*
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Frontispiece: Amitāyus, the Buddha of Infinite Life, courtesy of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection

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Contents

Preface by Tarthang Tulku	ix
Introduction	xii
The Early Development of Buddhism in India	3
Life of the Buddha	3
Qualities of the Buddha	18
The Thirty-Seven Wings of Enlightenment	19
Sections of the Thirty-Seven Wings	20
Preserving the Dharma	24
Development of the Sangha and the Three Councils	25
The Eighteen Schools	28
The Dharma in Kashmir and the Seven Patriarchs	30
The Vinaya Tradition	32
The Development of Sarvāstivāda and Abhidharma	35
The Development of the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika	39
Events Surrounding the Rise of Buddhism in India	41
The Later Development of Buddhism in India	53
The Two Most Excellent Ones and the Six Ornaments	53
Yogācāra: The Path of Introspection	78

Principal Works of the Yogācāra	81
Founding Fathers of Buddhist Logic	83
Prajñāpāramitā: The Heart of the Mahāyāna	84
Texts of the Prajñāpāramitā	86
Madhyamaka: The Open Dimension	88
Masters of the Mādhyamika School	91
The Three Dharmacakras and the Implicit and Definitive Meanings of the Buddha's Teachings	98
The Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas	103
Events Surrounding the Flourishing and Decline of Buddhism in India	110
The Development of Buddhism in Tibet	121
The Ancestral and Dynastic Origins of Tibetan Civilization	121
The Vinaya Lineage in Tibet	130
The Abhidharma Tradition in Tibet	148
Transmission of Prajñāpāramitā in Tibet	150
The Mādhyamika Tradition in Tibet	154
The Vajrayāna Lineages in Tibet	159
The Spiritual Courses of the Buddhist Tradition	159
Characteristics of Inner Tantras	169
The bKa'-ma Tradition	171
The Transmission of the Atiyoga bKa'-ma up to Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava	173
The Transmission of the Mahāyoga and the Lineage of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra	189
The Lineage of the Anuyoga	224
The Mind Section (Sems-sde) of the Atiyoga	232

The Section of the Unending Experience of Being (Klong-sde) of the Atiyoga	234
The Transmission of the Guidance Section (Man-ngag-sde) of the Atiyoga	238
The Transmission of the Central Doctrine of the Guidance Section	240
gTer-ma, the Concealed Treasures	255
The Eight rNying-ma Heruka Sādhanas	265
The Later rNying-ma Monasteries	270
Later Lamas of the rNying-ma Lineage	278
Seven Mūlagurus of Tarthang Tulku	290
Transmission Lineages	299
rNying-ma Monasteries in Tibet	303
A Time Line of Western and Buddhist Civilizations	320
Now That I Come to Die Klong-chen-pa	323
How Saṃsāra is Fabricated from the Ground of Being Klong-chen-pa	336
Suggested Readings	357
Bibliography	364
Index	387



Śākyamuni Buddha

Preface

During my years of working and living in America, I have met many students and professionals in various fields who have expressed an interest in pursuing the Buddhist path. Although American students seem eager to study, both students and scholars alike often tend to emphasize aspects of the teachings which, in the long run, are not of much practical use in life. Many times, there is more concern with external words and definitions than with inner meanings. Although a selective understanding of words and concepts may sometimes bring valuable insights, this form of learning seldom leads to developing an enlightened nature.

The teachings of the Buddha are not simply an assemblage of facts which can be obtained from books. The Buddhadharma is a dynamic tradition which finds its real meaning and value only when directly applied and integrated into one's life experience. The varied styles of expression of the Buddha's teachings are uniquely suited for different types of individuals who wish to pursue the Buddhist path. These living qualities of the teachings can be seen through the transformations Buddhism has undergone through the centuries—from the earliest Āgama collections, to the full range of Sūtras and śāstras, and later to Tibetan commentaries and original treatises, as well as the precious teachings of the bKa'-ma and gTer-ma.

The field of Buddhist studies is so expansive and the various philosophical lines are so numerous that students may not know where to begin. The emphasis of this volume of the Crystal Mirror Series is on providing the student some basic information as a kind of foundation for future studies and practice. It is offered as an introduction to those areas of Buddhist history and philosophical development that are principal factors leading to a general understanding of Tibetan Buddhism. Most of the materials presented here come from the

teachings of my gurus, from various traditional texts which I have consulted, and from research carried out by my students. I hope that this volume encourages both students and academic professionals to persist vigorously in their explorations of Buddhist studies, with an openness to the vast scope of meaning that the lineage of the oral tradition has preserved and unfolded for the benefit of all beings.

So far in America and the West, the wealth of knowledge represented by the heritage of Tibetan Buddhism and its complex and intertwining lineages of transmission has hardly been tapped. We are now fortunate to have a few translators who are beginning to uncover this treasure house of knowledge and practical insights—but this is only the beginning. There is so much more to be explored. The rNying-ma-pa (Nyingma school) in particular have preserved innumerable teachings that directly penetrate the nature of reality by providing practical methods for living a healthy and balanced life. As we begin to discover the depth of the contributions made by numerous great lamas throughout history, our appreciation for the beauty and richness of the Nyingma tradition naturally grows.

The Buddha once prophesied that 2,500 years after the Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha, the Buddhadharmā would spread to the land of the red-faced people. Many of the early Tibetans placed the birth of the Buddha at a time much earlier than what is commonly accepted today; because of this difference in dating, many took this prophecy to mean that the “country of the red-faced” referred to Tibet. But actually, the prophecy could more accurately be understood as referring to the “land of the red man,” a traditional term for the American continent. If this is so, and if we have confidence in the Buddha’s prophecy, this suggests that the Dharma may have a successful future in America. The openness of the American mind to many Buddhist attitudes and principles supports this hopeful reading of the prophecy—yet there remains much work ahead. Right now we are only at the beginning, and it is in this spirit that the material here is presented.

If the Buddhadharmā is to grow in America, thus ensuring its preservation, it must be studied and practiced within a traditional lineage. To make this possible, it is important to build Buddhist monasteries and communities. But this is only the outward face of the Buddhadharmā. In order to develop the necessary foundation to sustain one’s efforts on the path, it is necessary to develop a commitment to a teacher who holds a traditional lineage. Unless these lineages are carried

on, the Dharma will continue to enter America only in fragments, offering little of value to those who wish to actually practice the teachings. If the continuity of the lineage is broken because of the disappearance of qualified teachers, or because one's relationship with such teachers is not nurtured and maintained, the preservation of the profound teachings of the oral transmission cannot be assured. The risk is that the Dharma will become nothing more than a subject for the scholar's intellectual curiosity or a temporary phase in the life of those searching for spiritual fulfillment. If this were to happen, a jewel of priceless value would have been lost.

I would like to dedicate this volume of the Crystal Mirror Series as an aid and an inspiration to those who wish to share in the rich and vast teachings of the Buddhadharma. And I would like to thank those who have contributed articles to this volume, especially Dr. Guenther, who has provided a beautiful translation of Klong-chen-pa's final work.

Through this work, may all reach
the glorious citadel of inner peace.

Sarvam Maṅgalaṁ

Tarthang Tulku

Head Lama

Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center

Introduction

The material presented in the following sections is intended to introduce the general reader to many of the facets of the philosophy and literature of the Buddhist tradition. As Buddhism developed in India, emphasis was placed on the Vinaya, Sūtras, Abhidharma, Prajñāpāramitā, Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and logic. When the Dharma found new roots in Tibet, all these aspects of the teachings were fully transmitted. In addition, a strong emphasis was placed on the teachings of the Tantras, which in India had been passed down only to limited numbers of qualified students.

Though the teachings of the Enlightened Ones represent universal truth, there are many ways of interpreting the Dharma. Due to varying levels of understanding and cultural influences in the areas where Buddhism developed, a number of different schools arose, not only in India, but in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, and Mongolia. These different schools represent an ongoing attempt to find the most effective methods for traversing the path and arriving at the goal, as prescribed by the Buddha.

According to the method of the Sūtras, the path to enlightenment is exceedingly long. One attains realization only after countless lives devoted to arduous practice and mindful observation of the Buddha's teachings. But according to the Vajrayāna Tantras, one may attain Buddhahood in this lifetime and in this very body. Although the goal of the Sūtras and Tantras is the same, the path of the Tantras is more direct, opening to the practitioner many methods that are intended to bring swift results.

Yet the idea and experience of realization cannot be encompassed by any set of doctrines, for the reach and range of enlightenment surpasses the limitations imposed by any structure. The teachings of the Tathāgatas go beyond the spatial-temporal sphere. Vast as they are, the

collections of these teachings that have arisen in this world can merely hint at the teachings available in the extra-temporal sphere.

The limited range of a historical perspective cannot present the multi-dimensional range of 'universal Buddhahood', which occurs beyond the life-world of human beings. A different form of transmission is required. There are innumerable instances described in Buddhist texts in which the inspiration transmitted through a representation of the nonhuman sphere of pure spirituality becomes directly actualized in the mind of the human disciple, as in the case of revelation. In such cases, the disciple becomes the 'incarnation' (sprul-pa) of a higher reality.

In the case of the Ādibuddha Kun-tu-bzang-po—the symbolic expression of all Buddhas of the past, present, and future—this higher reality is beyond words or concepts, spatiality or temporality, not subject to cause and effect. For this domain—that of the Dharmakāya—to be cognized by human beings, it must first be transferred into apprehendable symbols or patterns. These in turn form the spectrum of being-made-manifest, first through the Sambhogakāya realm of the Five Tathāgatas, and then through the active involvement in the world of human beings undertaken by Bodhisattvas and incarnations. Such active embodiments of enlightened realizations would be considered in the Vajrayāna to form part of the lineage of Vidyādhara, bearers of pure awareness who bring to the human sphere whatever particular facet of Being is intelligible to the individual for whom it manifests. These various understandings of the path, linked to the level of intelligence and range of experience of the one who receives the transmission, eventually developed into the different spiritual courses.

As Buddhism spread into Tibet, the paths and schools that had developed in India continued to flourish, while at the same time fresh forms of understanding the Buddhadharmā unfolded. The transfer of the Buddhadharmā to Tibet was particularly auspicious for a number of reasons. Indian Buddhism in the eighth and ninth centuries was being encroached upon by various hostile forces, and the lineage of oral transmission and deep meditative realization required a receptive environment for its preservation. Aware of these forces at play, Indian masters such as Śāntaraṣita and Vimalamitra were anxious to see the Dharma prosper in Tibet, and made special efforts to assure that this happened. It is a great blessing for all humanity that these unparalleled efforts bore fruit.

From the time of Śāntarakṣita, the Precious Guru Padmasambhava, and the royal patron Khri-srong-lde-btsan, Tibetans energetically carried on the study and practice of the Sūtras, śāstras, and Tantras. The teachings of the Vinaya, established in Tibet at the very outset of the Dharma transmission, provided invaluable guidance and standards of self-discipline that aided in maintaining the harmony and integrity of the growing community of Dharma practitioners. The attitude of the Tibetan disciples was exemplary, for they were more than willing to dedicate their entire lives to the preservation of the Buddha's teachings. These early disciples and translators were not simply learned scholars: They were incarnations of great Bodhisattvas, endowed with the capability to perceive directly and communicate unerringly the inner meaning of the Buddha's teachings. In addition, these masters received assistance from scores of paṇḍitas who had come from India to further the direct oral transmission of the teachings. Therefore, it is generally acknowledged that the translations made during this period are closer to the spirit of the original texts than those carried out at a later time. The early rNying-ma masters, such as Khri-srong-lde-btsan, Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal, Vairotsana, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, Cog-ro Klu'i rgyal-mtshan, Ye-shes-sde, rMa Rin-chen-mchog, and gYu-sgra sNying-po, thus played an invaluable role in the preservation and transmission of the Buddhadharma.

The short summaries presented here of some of the principal philosophical schools and their transmission lineages in India and Tibet may afford a taste of the vast reaches of the Buddhadharma. As a basic guideline to aid students in their future research, this volume neither compares nor contrasts the differing scholarly opinions about the historical and philosophical developments of Buddhism, nor purports to communicate the traditional or decisive view. And while this revised edition has corrected certain errors that crept into the first edition, there are doubtless many inaccuracies that remain. It should thus be kept in mind that this account is simply an introduction to acquaint the reader with the basic foundation of these teachings. There is a definite need for a comprehensive investigation of these topics in the future that would aim at greater accuracy and depth of presentation.

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The Early Development of Buddhism in India

The Life of the Buddha

Within the seemingly unending process of becoming in which eternity takes on the atmosphere of time, there appears a chain of aeons or kalpas. (A kalpa in the Buddhist tradition is said to be somewhat less than the brahmanic reckoning of 4.32×10^9 years.) Within each kalpa there appear different cyclic ages or yugas. These begin during a time when sentient beings live exceedingly long lives (of 80,000 years) and end when the lifespan is less than ten years. In the kalpas preceding our own, no Buddhas appeared, since the aversion to worldly existence was not yet sufficiently great.

During our present kalpa, which is known as the Fortunate Aeon (bskal-pa-bzang-po, bhadra-kalpa), one thousand fully accomplished Buddhas have already come into existence or are yet to appear. During this present age, marked by increased corruption, materially-dependent existences, and reduced lifespans, the Dharma is held in reverence because of an understanding of impermanence brought about by the imminence of old age and death. But following this age will be a period of complete degeneration when the Buddhas will again cease to appear. That period will be characterized by five predominant features: further reduction in the lifespan, exceedingly corrupt actions, a predominance of the passions, incorrect views, and pervasive depression.

During this world-cycle, known as the Kāli Yuga, the number of Buddhas that have already appeared or will appear is seven. Śākyamuni (Shakya-thub-pa), the historical Buddha, is the fourth, and Maitreya (Byams-pa), the coming Buddha, will be fifth. These Buddhas voluntarily endure, throughout myriads of ages and numberless rebirths, whatever hardships may come in the process of helping living beings. Śākyamuni

Buddha, born into this world, repeatedly demonstrates the practice of the Ten Pāramitās, as a guide to the enlightenment of every individual.¹

The life of the Buddha includes twelve significant stages:

1. The resolve to be born into the human realm
2. The descent from Tuṣita Heaven
3. Entering the mother's womb
4. Physical birth
5. Accomplishment in worldly arts
6. A life of pleasure
7. Departure from the palace
8. Ascetic exercises
9. The conquest of Māra
10. Becoming a Buddha
11. Promulgating the teachings
12. Passing into Nirvāṇa

The resolve to be born into the human realm Before the birth of the Buddha, a certain group of Devaputras (gods abiding in the pure regions) assumed the forms of Brahmins residing on Jambudvīpa, the Southern continent. They prophesied to the Pratyekabuddhas that twelve years hence a Bodhisattva would be born who was endowed with the thirty-two marks of a Mahāpuruṣa (Great Man). He would become either a universal monarch or a Buddha, and would be known as Śākyamuni. The Bodhisattva, residing in Tuṣita Heaven, overhearing these words of the Brahmins, became engaged in four kinds of contemplation: of time, land, country, and family. He saw that his future life would span less than one hundred years; that Jambudvīpa was to be the continent in which he would appear; that central India was to be the country where he would be born; and that his caste was to be of the Kṣatriya (rGyal-rigs), that of rulers and warriors.

The descent from Tuṣita Heaven The Bodhisattva then ascended the throne, which was bedecked with garlands of flowers and redolent with varied perfumes and burning incenses. Delivering his last sermon to the countless myriads of Bodhisattvas in Tuṣita Heaven, he placed his crown of precious jewels on the head of Maitreya, the coming Buddha, and made

1. The Ten Pāramitās (highest perfections of the Bodhisattva) are generosity, morality and ethics, patience, effort, meditation, wisdom, skillful means, aspiration, strength, and pristine awareness. The practice of these ten forms a guide to the enlightenment of every individual.



The Dream of Queen Māyā A second century B.C.E. sandstone medallion from a railing post in Bharhut in which the Blessed One enters the sleeping queen from above in the form of an elephant.

his departure for Jambudvīpa. The Bodhisattva Maitreya would now be the expounder of the Dharma to the Bodhisattvas and devas residing in Tuṣita Heaven.

Entering the mother's womb In the palace of King Śuddhodana, in the city of Kapilavastu in northern India, there appeared eighteen miraculous signs foretelling the birth of the Buddha. During this time, when Queen Māyā was observing the Posadha fast, she had a dream that a white elephant entered her body through her right side. At that very moment, the Bodhisattva descended and the earth trembled six times as witness. Upon asking the Brahmins the meaning of this dream, Queen Māyā was



The Birth of the Buddha A ninth century relief sculpture near Lumbinī, the birthplace of the Bodhisattva.

told that a son endowed with exceptional properties was to be born to her. If he were to choose to reside in the royal palace, he would become a universal monarch, and if he were to depart from home to wander as a homeless monk, he would become a perfectly enlightened Buddha.

Physical birth As the mother-to-be was strolling through the Lumbinī Garden, she reached up to touch the limb of a fig-tree; at that moment the Bodhisattva emerged painlessly from her right side. Immediately after his birth, the Bodhisattva took seven steps. Wherever his foot touched the ground, lotuses sprouted forth. The earth became filled with innumerable jewels, flowers, and garlands; precious ornaments showered from the clouds; and a resplendent light spread through all the regions of the earth. The Blessed One, born as the Great Physician, then announced in a clear voice that this would be his last birth. The prince was named Siddhārtha, 'Purpose-Fulfilled.'

Seven days after his birth, Queen Māyā died and was reborn into the realm of the thirty-three gods. When the prince was still very young, a sage by the name of Asita (Nag-po), who was endowed with the five supernatural faculties (mngon-shes, abhijñā), came to the city of Kapilavastu and perfectly identified on the body of the Bodhisattva the thirty-two marks and eighty subsidiary characteristics of a Mahāpuruṣa. He then affirmed the previous declaration by the Brahmins that if this prince remained at home he would become a universal monarch, but if he departed to lead a homeless life, he would attain enlightenment in this very lifetime.

As the prince grew older, he followed the usual custom and joined the other youths of the Śākya clan in school. But as an example to them he demonstrated full mastery of writing, calculation, science, and art, thus showing that he was already proficient in all worldly knowledge.

Accomplishment in worldly arts King Śuddhodana, upon being reminded of the sage's prophecy by the council of elders, ordered the nobility to find a maiden suitable for the prince to marry. He hoped that in this way the prince would so enjoy life that he would not think of retiring from the kingdom, ending the lineage of Śākya kings. However, not desiring a life of sensual pleasure, the prince wrote down a list of all the virtuous qualities that would have to be met by such a wife: she must be in the flower of youth and beauty, and yet without pride; she must be benevolent, generous, modest, and restrained, neither haughty or presumptuous; she must be firm in the truth, respectful, well-educated, and pure in body, speech, and mind.

Within seven days, a number of suitable maidens were found. Among them was Gopā (Sa-'tsho-ma), who possessed all the qualities the prince described. The prince offered a bouquet to each of the maidens, but to

Gopā, who arrived last, he offered a priceless ring to indicate his choice, as was the custom.

Before Gopā's father would relinquish his daughter to the prince, he required him to demonstrate his skill and physical prowess. A tournament was held in which five hundred youths of the Śākya clan were assembled. At that time an elephant happened to stray into the midst of the tournament. The prince's cousin Devadatta, enraged and strengthened by his envy of the prince, gave the elephant one great blow and the beast fell dead. Then the Bodhisattva, seeing the elephant carcass, lifted it with his great toe; hurling the carcass across the seven great walls of the city, he cast it well into the surrounding countryside. Prince Siddhārtha then proceeded to outperform all the other contestants in numerous feats of skill. Upon seeing this, the father of Gopā joyfully gave his daughter's hand in marriage to the prince.

A life of pleasure Prince Siddhārtha, in order to act in accordance with worldly custom, crowned Gopā as the chief princess; in the company of her maidens, they led a life of pleasure. Observing these activities, several deities came before the Bodhisattva and exhorted him to remember the vow to aid all sentient beings which he had made countless lifetimes past.

Meanwhile, King Śuddhodana, forewarned in a dream that the prince would indeed leave the kingdom, provided his son even greater pleasures, including a luxurious palace with 30,000 maidens in attendance, where no other man was allowed. But as the prince listened to the music played by the noble maidens, he heard the words of past Buddhas, hidden within the sounds: "O pure and noble hero, recall to mind your resolution for the good of the earth. This is the time; this is the moment; this is the opportunity. Issue forth from this pleasure mansion, O noble Rṣi."

Now, Siddhārtha was such a delicately nurtured youth that he had never been allowed to see any sign of suffering. But it happened one day that the prince ordered his charioteer to take him for a drive outside the palace walls. On the journey he observed a man suffering from old age, and the charioteer explained to him that all of us must one day grow old and suffer, due to the frailty of the body. He then saw a man stricken with an incurable disease—emaciated, weak, and with his faculties impaired. So the charioteer explained to the prince the nature of sickness. A little later they came upon a procession bearing a corpse, and the charioteer explained to the Bodhisattva that death must eventually come to all of us.

On yet another occasion the prince met a deva of a pure realm who assumed the appearance of a mendicant monk. This bhikṣu, bearing an alms-bowl and clad in a saffron robe, was standing calm, quiet, and self-possessed. He was leading a life of strict discipline and embracing the spiritual path. Deeply affected by what he saw, the prince ordered the charioteer to swiftly return to the palace.

Departure from the palace Although the king offered Siddhārtha every pleasure that his kingdom could supply, he was unsuccessful at keeping the Bodhisattva in his royal captivity. At that time, there appeared certain signs foretelling the Bodhisattva's inevitable departure, and the king was deeply distressed that the glory of the Śākya race would soon decline. When his father implored him to remain, the prince agreed that if the king could grant him four wishes, he would stay and rule the kingdom, relinquishing all thoughts of leaving. The prince's first wish was that old age would never assail him and that he would retain his youthful radiance forever. His second request was that he would remain in perpetual health and that no disease would ever attack him. Thirdly, he asked that he be made immortal so that death would never haunt him. And finally, he requested that he would always be abundantly wealthy and never be subject to any misfortune.

King Śuddhodana acknowledged that he lacked the power to grant his son any of the boons requested. Thereupon, the Bodhisattva characterized the round of life as a play, which goes on from the infinite past, deceiving, entangling, and destroying. He reflected on his life of unending pleasure in the palace, and no longer viewed it as attractive or desirable.

In some accounts of the Buddha's life, it is said that at that very moment, King Śuddhodana, having heard that Gopā had brought forth a son, sent a messenger to announce the glad news to Prince Siddhārtha. On hearing the message, the Bodhisattva said, "An impediment and fetter (rāhula) has been born to me this day." When the messenger reported to the king what the prince had said, he replied, "My grandson's name will be Prince Rāhula."

Observing the life of the harem of women, the prince grew ever more conscious that his pleasure-dwelling was actually an immersion into the darkness of delusion. He was like a bird in a cage who could never fly free. Oppressed by the sorrows and tribulations of what he saw, he went forth from home. Casting off his garments and ornaments of royalty, he clothed himself in the saffron-colored robe of an ascetic.

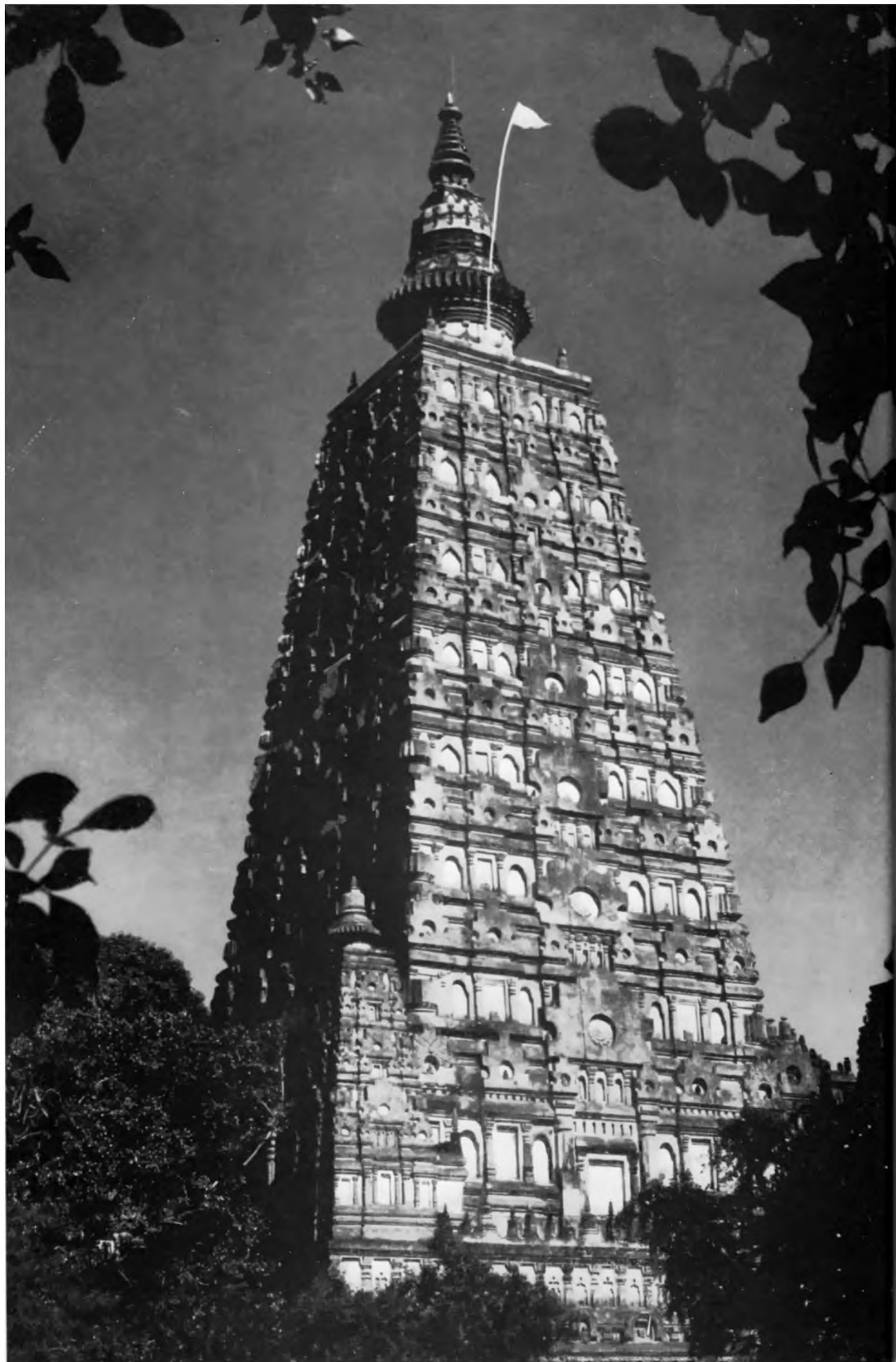
Ascetic exercises The Bodhisattva first sought instruction from two learned sages, Ārāḍa-kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra, but he found their teaching incomplete, for it did not reveal the origin of suffering and the path leading to its cessation. So he spent the next six years observing rigid ascetic practices such as feeding on three grains of rice per meal and practicing the suspension of breath. During this time he was joined by five other ascetics, who regarded him with respect and adoration. But as time passed and he became increasingly emaciated, the thirty-two marks of a Buddha disappeared from his body. He realized that the practice of austerities is like endeavoring to tie the air into knots—it is not possible to attain the highest aim through asceticism alone. So the Bodhisattva left the woods which were near the bank of the Nairāñjanā River and went to Uruvelā, in order to take more substantial food.

In Uruvelā a young woman named Sujātā saw the Bodhisattva sitting under a banyan-tree and mistook him for a deity of the tree who had come to receive offerings. So she prepared a dish of rice-milk for the Bodhisattva, and perceiving that he was a Great Being, she made obeisance to him. Taking the dish of rice-milk with him, he returned to the Nairāñjanā River. When his companions in ascetic practices saw that he was eating, they became disgusted at what they considered to be his self-indulgence, and decided to have nothing more to do with him.

The conquest of Māra After bathing in the Nairāñjanā River, the Bodhisattva dressed himself in clean garments and then took his noon-day meal of rice-milk. The thirty-two marks of a Great Being reappeared. Full of strength and vitality, he vowed to take no further nourishment until the end of forty-nine days. The Bodhisattva now set off toward the Bodhi tree in order to vanquish Māra, Lord of Illusion. On his way, he met a grass-cutter who gave him eight handfuls of kuśa grass which would serve as a seat. Upon taking his seat on this cushion of grass underneath the Bodhi tree, he vowed that he would not arise before attaining enlightenment, though his body were to wither away. Thereupon, the future Buddha caused a light to shine forth from his body—a light which was seen throughout the innumerable regions of the heavens. He then sent a beam

Vajrāsana, beneath the Bodhi Tree This third century slab marks the place where the Bodhisattva attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gayā. The Bodhi tree, the roots and leaves of which can be seen to the left of the seat, is a descendant of the original Bodhi tree.





of light to penetrate Māra's abode, announcing to Māra that his absolute reign over the minds of beings was about to end. Māra called upon his army to attack the Bodhisattva; shouting its war cry, the hideous horde advanced toward the Bodhi tree.

Brandishing swords, arrows, hatchets, and knives, the demon army advanced on the Lion of Enlightenment. Serpents stretched out their venomous fangs, and distorted creatures wielded firebrands. But the Bodhisattva paid no heed to the approaching torrents of wrathful forms conjured up by Māra's magic. Seeing the Bodhisattva unmoved by this display, Māra sent forth flaming, razor-sharp missiles. But as the demon missiles approached the future Buddha, they were transformed into celestial bouquets of flowers.

Then Māra sent his daughters, who assumed the forms of ravishing young maidens, to distract the Bodhisattva from his purpose. But their guise did not deceive the Great Being. Under his gaze they became ugly hags, ill-kempt, bent like rafters and leaning on walking sticks. None of Māra's illusory forms could sway the Bodhisattva from his resolve.

The Bodhisattva now proclaimed to Māra that the seat which future Buddhas had always used on the day of their enlightenment belonged to him. At that, Māra wished to know who was witness to that fact, and the Bodhisattva replied, "The earth itself is my witness." As he said this, he touched the earth with his right hand, and it trembled six times. Then the earth goddess Sthāvarā appeared and said, "O Highest of Beings, you alone are the one who will achieve the highest accomplishment; no one else on this earth has achieved it before. What you have said is perfectly true." Upon hearing this, Māra and his army fled like jackals hearing the lion's roar in the forest.

Becoming a Buddha After the Blessed One had vanquished the army of Māra during the first watch of the night, the Bodhisattva continued to sit in solitude under the Bodhi tree. During the second watch he became absorbed in the four degrees of meditation (dhyāna, bsam-gtan), which induce perfect mindfulness of equanimity. He then obtained the three kinds of highest knowledge, which allowed him to recall his count-

The Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh Gayā The many temples and Stūpas at Bodh Gayā were built at various times over many centuries. The topmost section of the main temple was constructed by Nāgārjuna.

less past lives, the lives of all the Buddhas who had come before him, and the coming and going of endless living forms in the constant round of death and rebirth.

During the third watch, just before sunrise, his consciousness opened like a flower, and he perceived clearly the impermanence and conditional nature of all existence. Fearless and undismayed, he remained in deep samādhi, free of all that perpetuates frustration and pain.

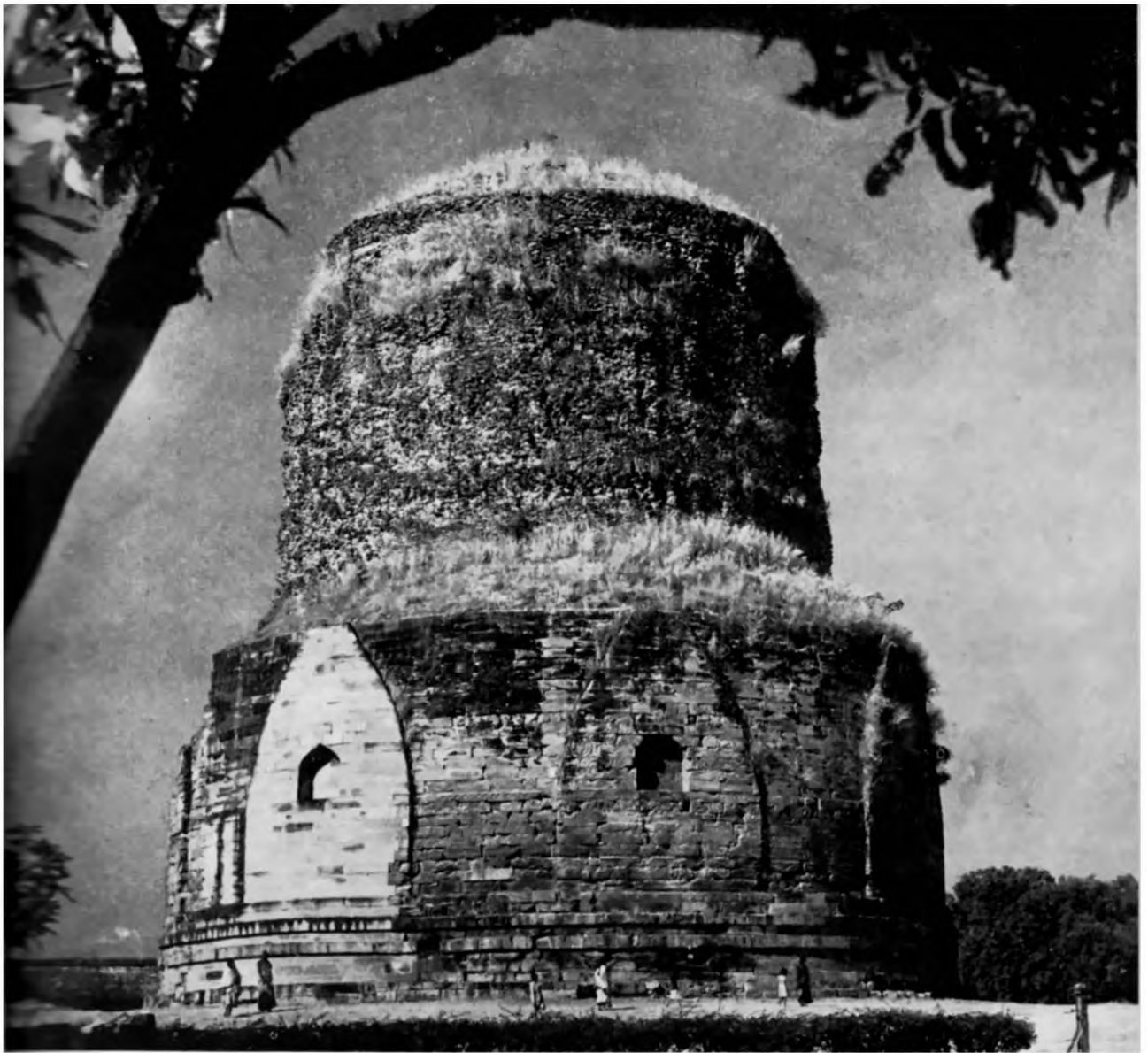
As dawn began to break, the beating of countless drums heralded the Bodhisattva's transformation into a Buddha, a fully awakened being. At that moment, flowers rained from the heavens, the world grew full of light, and the earth trembled seven times. All the Buddhas of the Ten Directions appeared before him and paid him honor.

Śākyamuni had attained the unimaginable qualities of a Buddha; he manifested the nature of perfect purity, his equanimity in action for the benefit of himself and others demonstrated sublime altruistic knowledge, and he combined supreme concern for the welfare of all sentient beings with the discriminating qualities of perfectly awakened mind.

For seven days the Enlightened One contemplated the meaning of his discovery. Then a great storm arose out of season, pouring forth rain, cold winds, and darkness for seven days. The Nāga King Mucilinda came out of his realm to protect the Buddha. Wrapping the Blessed One's body seven times in his coils, he spread his great hood out above the Buddha's head until the storm had subsided.

At the end of forty-nine days, the merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika visited the Blessed One, who was residing at the root of the Rājāyatana tree. They honored him with an offering of rice cake and honey, which the Buddha accepted. Thus the Buddha broke his forty-nine day fast.

Promulgating the teachings Having understood the profound truth, intelligible only to the wise, the Buddha thought it impossible to demonstrate to others the nature of his attainment. Four times the great Brahmā, lord of the highest heavens, descended to the human realm to exhort the Buddha to teach the Dharma, pointing out that there were some beings capable of benefiting from his instruction. So the Buddha, out of his unlimited compassion, surveyed the world with his omnipotent insight and saw the varying qualities and faculties of beings. Finding that there were indeed those for whom his words would open the door to truth, he consented to teach the Dharma. He chose as the site of his first



Dhamekh Stūpa, Sārnāth This Stūpa marks the place where the Buddha first turned the Wheel of the Dharma.

teaching the grove of Ṛṣipatana, in the Deer Park of the ancient city of Vārāṇasī.

When the gods became aware of the Buddha's resolve, the heavens thundered. As the Buddha made his way to the Deer Park, the road to Vārāṇasī was festooned with fine cloth, redolent with incense, adorned all its length with flowers, and bedecked with necklaces of pearls. Beside the road appeared fragrant celestial streams, covered with red and white lotuses and shaded by mango, rose-apple, coconut, and pomegranate trees. Countless devas joined the Blessed One; advancing with great majesty, the procession grew into the thousands.

Upon approaching the river Ganges, the Buddha asked the ferryman to take him across, but as he had no fare, the ferryman refused. So the Buddha rose into the air and passed over the river like a king of swans.

After his arrival at Vārāṇasī, the Buddha accepted alms, took his meal, and then proceeded to Ṛṣipatana. There he came upon his five former companions, who had left him when he renounced ascetic practices. Seeing him approach, the five determined to pay him no heed, yet as he came nearer, so apparent was his splendor and majesty that they rose up to meet him like birds whose nests are burning beneath them. Speaking gently to the five, the Buddha accepted them as his first disciples.

At the place where the Buddha was to set the Wheel of the Dharma into motion, there appeared one thousand jeweled thrones, symbolizing the one thousand Buddhas of this Fortunate Aeon. Each throne was made of the seven kinds of jewels, symbolizing the seven Buddhas who would appear during this world cycle. Circumambulating the thrones which had belonged to the three previous Buddhas, he seated himself on the fourth. Then a light issued forth from his body, illuminating the 3,000 thousand worlds. The earth trembled as the deities presented him with a golden wheel of one thousand spokes and implored him to turn the Wheel of the Dharma. With this gesture, the Blessed One proceeded to set forth the teachings of liberation.

In this first Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma, the Buddha expounded the teachings of the Middle Way, declaring the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment. The first Turning continued for seven years, beginning with the first sermon in Vārāṇasī to his first five disciples.

The Second Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma was initiated at Vulture Peak. There the Blessed One taught such subjects as *sūnyatā* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* to five thousand monks, nuns, and laity, and to innumerable Bodhisattvas. After the Second Turning had gone on for a number of years, the Third Turning, expounding such subtle aspects of the Buddha's teachings as the *Tathāgatagarbha*, was delivered in various places throughout India.

During his life, the Buddha traveled throughout India and in other regions. Sites of special importance for the spread of the Dharma included Uruvilvā, Rājagṛha, Kapilavastu, Vaiśālī, and Kuśinagara. It was during the Buddha's first visit to Rājagṛha that the first two great disciples of the Buddha—Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana—joined the Sangha.



The Nirvāṇa Chaitya This Stūpa in Kuśinagara commemorates the site of Lord Buddha's Parinirvāṇa.

Ānanda, Upāli, and other principal disciples also joined him in those early days, and soon the Buddhist Sangha began to grow substantially.

On one occasion when the Blessed One was out gathering alms, his former wife Gopā saw him and had the desire of winning him back. Thus, she gave to her son, Rāhula, a special charm and told him to present it to his father. When the child approached the place the Buddha was teaching, there suddenly appeared five hundred Buddhas. But Rāhula recognized his father among them all, and gave him the charm. Śākyamuni returned the charm to his son, and he swallowed it, whereafter he could not be prevented from following the path of his father. Seeing that this was his son's last birth, the Buddha told Śāriputra to admit the child into the order, even though he was only six years old. Eventually, Gopā entered the order as a nun, while Rāhula became a foremost disciple.

Passing into Nirvāṇa During the rainy season of his eightieth year, the Buddha contracted a fatal illness. Accepting this with self-possession, he called the venerable Ānanda, who took a seat respectfully to one side of the Blessed One. The Buddha explained to Ānanda that he had reached the sum of his days, and spoke on the meaning of taking refuge. Shortly

thereafter, the Buddha gave a major discourse to his disciples, explaining the Thirty-seven Wings of Enlightenment. Then the Enlightened One departed in the direction of Vaiśālī. As he instructed the monks in the Three Trainings (*śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā*), the earth trembled, signaling the imminence of the Buddha's final nirvana (*Parinirvāṇa*).

The Buddha continued on to Kuśinagara and had a seat erected between two *sāla* trees. With his back to the north, he lay down on his right side. As he was about to pass away, he gave further precepts to his disciples on topics such as mindfulness and the three marks of existence (*anitya*, *anātman*, and *duḥkha*). Reminding his disciples of impermanence, that all that is born must come to an end, he became absorbed in four degrees of meditation, culminating in *Parinirvāṇa*. The moment the Buddha passed away, the earth trembled, the stars shot from the heavens, and in the ten quarters of the sky there burst forth flames and the sounds of celestial music.

Qualities of the Buddha

The teachings that Śākyamuni transmitted were as profound and all-encompassing as was the enlightenment he attained under the Bodhi tree. The transcending awareness and inexhaustible energy of enlightenment manifested itself in numerous qualities which characterize a Buddha—qualities that cover the full scope of human experience. Eight of the most important of these are:

1. Immutability (*'dus-ma-byas-pa-nyid*, *asaṃskṛtattva*) or unconditionedness. The Buddha is incapable of falling into the realm of samsaric existence, and his experience of Buddhahood has no beginning, middle, or end.
2. Effortlessness (*lhun-gyis-grub-pa*, *anābhogātā*) because all dualistic views (*spros-pa*, *prapañca*) and dualistic notions (*rnam-par-rtog-pa*, *vikalpa*) have been eliminated.
3. Enlightenment that is Self-Sustaining and Not Dependent Upon Others (*gzhan-gyi-rkyen-gyis-mngon-par-rtogs-pa-ma-yin-pa*, *aparapartyāya-abhisambodhi*). The *Tathāgata*, in being immutable, proceeds without effort to enlighten others from a beginningless past to an indeterminable future.
4. Self-Born Awareness (*ye-shes*, *jñāna*) which is able to comprehend all factors leading to Enlightenment.

5. Compassion (thugs-rje, karuṇā) that is exemplified in a Buddha's mastery of leading sentient beings toward enlightenment.
6. Supernormal Power (nus-pa, śakti) which unites wisdom and compassion.
7. Fulfillment of Self-Benefit (rang-gi-don-phun-sum-tshogs-pa, svārthasaṃpatti), the basis of the Buddha's own Enlightenment, which is concerned with the first three aspects above.
8. Fulfillment of Benefit for Others (gzhan-gyi-don-phun-sum-tshogs-pa, parārthasaṃpatti), the basis for setting the Wheel of the Dharma² into motion, which is connected with the second three aspects above.

The Thirty-Seven Wings of Enlightenment

All of the teachings which the Buddha expounded were for the sake of leading beings out of the experience of recurring frustration into the open dimension of genuine freedom. As the practice of Buddhism developed, the Buddha's various teachings were categorized under specific

2. The fathomless aspects of the Buddha's teaching, generally referred to as the Dharma, are suggested by the numerous meanings of the word dharma itself, which include:

1. Any element of existence, or any observable fact
2. The Buddhist Path (knowledge in action)
3. The experience of enlightenment
4. Any non-sensuous object of the mind
5. Any wholesome thought or action
6. Life in general, or that which gives us sustenance, supports our bodily existence, and determines our span of life
7. The teachings of the Buddha and other accomplished masters
8. The ceaseless process of becoming, or the phenomenon of origination and change
9. The taking of religious vows
10. Worldly law which maintains the moral dictates of society
11. The bearer of true and incontrovertible meaning, arriving at certainty
12. That which prevents rebirth in a lower form of existence
13. That which is 'real' in terms of absolute truth
14. The true and reliable refuge
15. That which is eternal and uncreated, not subject to suffering, old age, and death, such as bodhicitta
16. The object of supreme knowledge
17. In the ethical sphere, meritorious conduct
18. A religious denomination

topics in order to make them more accessible and memorable. But the various categories were also seen as a dynamic, interwoven pattern which precisely expressed the path to liberation. In one of his last major instructions to his disciples, the 'Thirty-Seven Wings of Enlightenment' (Byang-chub-kyi-phyogs-dang-mthun-pa'i-chos, Bodhipakṣika-dharmaḥ), the Conqueror summarized all his major teachings into a complex pattern, showing that through their interrelationships they formed a unitary guide to a single goal.

Insight into the Four Noble Truths and successful practice of the Eightfold Path are linked to the thirty-seven topics (chos, dharma) leading towards Enlightenment (byang-chub, bodhi), representing the highest levels of spiritual attainment on the path. The degree of understanding of these two facets indicates the level of attainment on the Bodhisattva path, as set forth in the five stages: the Path of Accumulation (tshogs-lam, sambhara-mārga), the Path of Application (sbyor-lam, prayoga-mārga), the Path of Insight (mthong-lam, darśana-mārga), the Path of Cultivation (sgom-lam, bhāvana-mārga), and the Path of Mastery (mi-slob-pa'i-lam, aśaikṣa-mārga).

These five paths can be viewed in relation to the Thirty-Seven Wings of Enlightenment as a whole, as well as to the ten stages of the Bodhisattva path, the six perfections (pāramitā), and the three trainings: morality (tshul-khrims, śīla), concentrative absorption (ting-nge-'dzin, samādhi) and wisdom (shes-rab, prajñā).

Sections of the Thirty-Seven Wings

The Path of Accumulation At the outset of this path one practices the Four Applications of Mindfulness (dran-pa-nyer-bzhag-bzhi, smṛty-upasthāna). These consist of mindfulness of:

- the physical (lus, kāya) [1]³
- feeling (tshor-ba, vedanā) [2]
- the mind (sems, citta) [3]
- the whole of reality (chos, dharma) [4]

Through such mindfulness one comes to recognize all of one's experience as characterized by impermanence (mi-rtag-pa, anitya),

3. Numbers in brackets list aspects of the Thirty-Seven Wings of Enlightenment.

absence of 'self' or 'ego' (bdag-med, anātman), misery (sdug-bsngal, duḥkha), and openness (stong-pa, śūnya).

Mindfulness of the physical world or body encompasses the ability to perceive through one's body the external world, one's own sensory apparatus, and that of others. It involves impermanence, or the ceaseless flow or flux of all elements of existence (chos, dharma). Co-relational with the term anātman, the absence of any permanent substance, is the arising (kun-'byung, samudaya) of the body as a system, followed by its passing away. Here, all thirty-two parts of the body are contemplated both internally and externally. Contained within the contemplation on the body are included the four elementary qualities (khams, dhātu), which are contained within the sphere of color-form. They are: materiality (earth, sa, pṛthivī), motility (air, rlung, vāyu), temperature (fire, me, tejas), and cohesion (water, chu, ap).

Mindfulness of the world of feeling includes the operation of those psychological processes which give the content of experience a definite value or feeling-tone: happiness (bde-ba, sukha), misery (sdug-bsngal, duḥkha), and equanimity (btang-snyoms, aduḥkhamasukha).

Mindfulness of the world of mind consists of the six spheres of perception, including the twelve component elements (skye-mched, āyatāna), and the eighteen fields of interaction (khams, dhātu).

Mindfulness of the whole of reality includes mindfulness of the motivational factors ('du-byed, saṃskāra) with the exception of feeling.

The Path of Accumulation also encompasses the four renunciations (yang-dag-par-spong-ba-bzhi, samyakprahāṇa [5–8] which put an end to unwholesomeness, while fostering and strengthening wholesomeness. finally, it includes the four bases of miraculous power (rdzu-'phrul-gyir-kang-pa-bzhi, ṛddhipāda) [9–12] consisting of strong interest ('dun-pa, chanda), perseverance (brtson-pa, vīrya), intentiveness (sems-pa, citta), and investigation (dpyod-pa, mīmāṃsā).

The Path of Application This path begins with the five controlling powers (stobs, bala [13–17]: faith (dad-pa, śraddhā), sustained effort (brston-'grus, vīrya), inspection (dran-pa, smṛti), concentrative absorption (ting-nge-'dzin, samādhi), and wisdom (shes-rab, prajñā). The heightening of these powers through repeated practice allows them to achieve the sovereignty of the five unshakable powers (dbang-po, indriya) [18–22].

The Path of Insight Upon the full attainment of the five unshakable powers, one directly perceives the open dimension of being (*śūnyatā*, *stong-pa-nyid*). Now one has achieved the first of the ten levels of the Bodhisattva, the level of the Joyous One. A tranquility arises from the true awareness of the Four Noble Truths: the pervasiveness of suffering (*sdug-bsngal*, *duḥkha*), the cause of suffering (*kun-'byung*, *samudaya*), the cessation of suffering (*'gog-pa*, *nirodha*), and the path to liberation (*lam*, *mārga*). Each truth has four aspects: acceptance of its truth and actual awareness of its truth, followed by acceptance and actual awareness applied to the higher realms of existence.

At this stage, the seven factors of enlightenment [23–29] (*byang-chub-kyi-yan-lag-bdun*, *bodhyaṅga*) operate: attentive inspection (*dran-pa*, *smṛti*), investigation of meanings and values (*chos-rab-rnam-'byed*, *dharma-pravicaya*), sustained effort (*brtson-'grus*, *vīrya*), joy (*dga'ba*, *prīti*), refinement and serenity (*shin-tu-sbyang-ba*, *praśrabdhi*), concentrative absorption (*ting-nge-'dzin*, *samādhi*), and equanimity (*btang-snyoms*, *upekṣā*).

The Path of Cultivation At this stage, there is an awareness that all the causes of misery have lost their power, so there can be no 'effect' of misery. Here occurs the practice through which are brought to fulfillment the members of the Eightfold Noble Path (*'phags pa'i lam-yan-lag brgyad*, *Āryamārgāṅga*) [30–37]: right view (*yang-dag-pa'i-lta-ba*, *samyag-drṣṭi*), right intention (*yang-dag-pa'i-rtog-pa*, *samyak-saṃkalpa*), right speech (*yang-dag-pa'i-ngag*, *samyag-vāc*), right action (*yang-dag-pa'i las-kyi-mtha'*, *samyak-karmānta*), right livelihood (*yang-dag-pa'i-'tsho-ba*, *samyag-ājīva*), right effort (*yang-dag-pa'i-rtsol-ba*, *samyag-vyāyāma*), right mindfulness (*yang-dag-pa'i-dran-pa*, *samyak-smṛti*), and right concentration (*yang-dag-pa'i-ting-nge-'dzin*, *samyak-samādhi*).

The three trainings relate to the Eightfold Noble Path in the following manner:

Right Speech	}	Morality
Right Action		
Right Livelihood		
Right Effort	}	Concentrative Absorption
Right Mindfulness		
Right Concentration		
Right View	}	Wisdom
Right Intention		

Through the practice of these three trainings, we can develop the ability to perceive the world precisely, without distortion or bias, and we can begin to act in the world appropriately and fruitfully. In particular, concentrative absorption is more than a 'technique' to enable us to calm our minds or to find some temporary sense of peace or serenity. It actually enables us to free ourselves from the desires and attachments which fetter us both emotionally and intellectually. Through the meditative stages of self-growth, we begin to see the true nature of reality, and with this, compassion for all sentient beings is born. The essence of meditative concentration is a completely focused mind (*rtse-gcig, ekāgratā*). This is a state in which the mind no longer references itself to relative values, but experiences itself as the ultimate nature of being.

On the Path of Cultivation one gradually progresses through the other nine of the ten stages of the Bodhisattva path:

2. The Stainless One (*dri-ma-med-pa, vimalā*)
3. The Illuminating One (*'od-byed-pa, prabhākari*)
4. The Flaming One (*'od-'phro-can, arcīsmatī*)
5. The One Difficult to Conquer (*shin-tu-sbyang-dka'-ba, sudurjayā*)
6. The Manifest One (*mngon-du-gyur-pa, abhimukhī*)
7. The Far Going One (*ring-du-song-ba, durāṅgamā*)
8. The Unshakable One (*mi-g.yo-ba, acalā*)
9. The One of Good Discrimination (*legs-pa'i-blo-gros, sādhumatī*)
10. Cloud of Dharma (*chos-kyi-sprin, dharmamegha*)

The Bodhisattva, on each of the ten levels, emphasizes practice of one of the Ten Pāramitās (Transcending Functions), although without neglecting the others. On the first level he emphasizes giving or generosity (*sbyin-pa*), on the second morality and ethics (*tshul-khrims*), on the third patience (*bzod-pa*), on the fourth effort (*brtson-'grus*), on the fifth meditation or concentrative absorption (*ting-nge-'dzin*), on the sixth wisdom (*shes-rab*), on the seventh skillful means (*thabs-la mkhas-pa*), on the eighth aspiration (*smon-lam*), on the ninth strength (*stobs*), and on the tenth pristine awareness (*ye-shes*).

Path of Fulfillment This fifth and final path is the actual experience of Buddhahood—the pinnacle to which all the teachings of the Buddha have been directed. Once one attains this experience, all divisions and differentiations naturally dissolve into the unity of Being.

Preserving the Dharma

Only a fully enlightened being is capable of retaining and teaching the totality of the Dharma—like a single candle illuminating an entire cave. However, in order to preserve and protect the teachings and the purity of their transmission, the Buddha chose a number of Arhats and Bodhisattvas to carry on with his work. The Buddhadharma in its multi-faceted forms and the enlightened actions arising from these teachings are all preserved and protected by Vajrapāṇi. The teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha in particular are protected by the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, as well as by the deities Brahmā, Indra, and others. As stated in the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra:

The Master of Sages (the Tathāgata) will pass away into Nirvāṇa, and, in order to protect the Highest Doctrine, there will be one who appears in the form of Mañjuśrī; it will be he who constantly preserves the Buddhadharma.

Sixteen Arhats or Sthaviras were also entrusted by Śākyamuni Buddha with the preservation of the Buddhadharma. Each of these Arhats vowed not to pass away into Nirvāṇa, but to prolong his life so that he could continue the work of the Buddha and reveal and protect the Dharma. These sixteen Arhats possess miraculous powers which enable them to travel to various parts of the world to spread the Buddhadharma. After their duty on earth is fulfilled, they will enter into nirvāṇa, and like the dying flame of a lamp their bodies will disappear without leaving any trace.⁴ In addition, the Buddha prophesied that there would be seven hierarchs or patriarchs (gtad-rabs-bdun) who would serve as guardians

4. The sixteen Arhats are:

1. Aṅgaja (Yan-lag-'byung), who resides on Mount Kailasa
2. Ajita (Ma-pham-pa), who dwells on Drang-srong, the Crystal Wood of the Sages, or on Mt. Bya-rgod-phung-po
3. Vanavāsin (Nags-na-gnas), who dwells in the cave of Saptaparnī or on Mt. Lus-'phags-po
4. Kālīka (Dus-ldan-zhabs), who dwells in Tāmradvīpa in India
5. Vajrīputra (rDo-rje-mo'i-bu-zhabs), who dwells in Simhaladvīpa
6. Śrībhadra (bZang-po), who dwells in Yamunādvīpa
7. Kanakavatsa (gSer-be'u-zhabs), who dwells in Kashmir
8. Kanakabharadvāja (Bha-ra-dhva-ja-gser-can), who dwells in the Western Continent
9. Bakula (Ba-ku-la-zhabs), who resides on the Northern Continent
10. Rāhula (sGra-gcan-'dzin), who resides in Priyaṅgudvīpa

of the Dharma and the Vinaya lineage until the time of Nāgārjuna. Those Arhats were to be Kāśyapa, Ānanda, Śānavāsika, Upagupta, Dhītika, Kṛṣṇa, and Mahāsudarśana.⁵

Development of the Sangha and the Three Councils

After the Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha (486 or 483 B.C.E. according to most Western sources, 544 B.C.E. according to the Pāli tradition, 881 B.C.E. according to the most authoritative rNying-ma account), Mahākāśyapa, one of the Buddha's closest disciples, followed the instructions given him by the Buddha and assembled the order of monks who had become Arhats. This first great convocation of the Buddhist Sangha was held for the purpose of reciting and codifying the Buddha's teachings in order to preserve them correctly. It was mutually decided that an assembly of five hundred Arhats would convene in Rājagṛha, where Ajātaśatru, the king of Magadha, would supply them with food and lodging, as the rainy season was upon them.

As the one chosen by the Buddha to guide the Sangha, Mahākāśyapa presided over the Council. This great Arhat had been born the son of a rich Brahmin in Magadha, yet at an early age he felt a distaste for the world of riches and pleasure. According to one account, he complied with custom by marrying a beautiful girl from Vaiśālī. His wife, he discovered, had an equal disdain for the pleasures of sensuality. So, for twelve years they lived together in complete chastity, even sleeping in separate beds. Then one evening Kāśyapa saw a large snake enter their quarters and approach the hand of his sleeping wife. Sensing imminent danger, he quickly grasped her arm, startling her from sleep. Without noticing the snake, she accused him of having impure thoughts. As a result of this

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11. Cūḍapanthaka (Lam-phran-brdan), who resides on the Vulture Peak (Gṛdhrakūṭa)
 12. Piṇḍola Bharadvāja (Bharadvāja bsod-snyoms-len), who dwells in a cave on the Eastern Continent
 13. Panthaka (Lam-bstan), who dwells in the heaven of the thirty-three gods
 14. Nāgasena (Klu'i-sde), who resides on Urumunda mountain
 15. Gopaka (sBed-byed), who resides on Mount Bihula
 16. Abhedā (Mi-phyed-pa), who resides on Mt. Gangs-can, near Shambhala, or in the Himalayan region.

5. The Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya adds Madhyāntika to the list.



Rājagṛha The hills of this ancient valley were host to the First Council.

incident, they both agreed that they should separate and pursue the spiritual life. Eventually, he entered the Sangha.

Another key participant in the Council was Ānanda, who had been the Buddha's personal attendant during the last twenty-five years of his life. Initially Ānanda was barred from admittance because his long years of faithful service had kept him from the meditative realization necessary to attain the state of the Arhat. But knowing that his presence was necessary, he withdrew to a cave to meditate, and just before the Council convened, Ānanda achieved his goal.

In those days of the early Sangha, the means for preserving and handing down the teachings of the Buddha was recitation and memorization, a method which had been used in India since the earliest Vedic period. Because he had been present at almost every occasion where the

Buddha had spoken, Ānanda recited the Sūtras; Upāli recounted the Vinaya rules, and Mahākāśyapa set forth the mātṛkas, the statements which later developed into the Abhidharma. One of the powers achieved by all Arhats was the ability to remember perfectly whatever was heard. So, when these teachings of the Buddha were recited, there was unanimous agreement that they corresponded exactly to the Buddha's own words. This First Council is known by various names, including the Council at Rājagṛha, the Council of Five Hundred, the Recitation of the Vinaya, and the Vinaya-saṅgīti.

According to Nāgārjuna, at the same time a multitude of Bodhisattvas assembled at the mountain of Vimalasvabhāva, south of Rājagṛha, to compile the Mahāyāna Sūtras. The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra presided over this council of Bodhisattvas; Vajrapāṇi recited the Sūtras, Maitreya the Vinaya, and Mañjuśrī the Abhidharma.

In its formative period, the early Sangha consisted of wandering monks (parivrājakas) who taught the Buddhadharma to any who wished to hear it. During the rainy season they would suspend their wandering and settle down in communities, where they lived in accord with the Prātimokṣa, the monastic code of conduct consisting of approximately 250 rules which were to govern the lives of the monks. The rudiments of Buddhist monastic life were thus established, and eventually, various practices emerged which served to mold the monastic community into a cohesive body. For instance, the recitation of the Prātimokṣa was performed two times each month on the day of the Upavastha, when the monks were given the opportunity to confess transgressions to the assembly.

Gradually, the wandering life drew to an end and the various Sangha communities established themselves as distinct groups. Geographically separate, they became increasingly specialized in a particular facet or subtlety of the Doctrine. With time, the first seeds of diversity among the Sangha community were sown.

The Second Council at Vaiśālī occurred about one hundred years after the Parinirvāṇa. This council was held because a certain contingent of monks at Vaiśālī were accused of becoming lax in their observance of ten points of discipline. The chief point which seems to have been transgressed was the practice of soliciting gold and silver. This Council is commonly referred to as the Council at Vaiśālī, or the Recital of Seven Hundred.

According to Bhavya, a Second Council at Pāṭaliputra occurred approximately thirty-seven years after the Second Council at Vaiśālī, or about one hundred and forty years after the Parinirvāṇa. Though accounts vary, it seems that a chief factor in this council was the observation made by a monk named Mahādeva that some Arhats were more spiritually accomplished than others. The majority of the monks at this council sided with Mahādeva, leading in time to a division in the Sangha between the Mahāsāṅghika (the Great Sangha) and the Sthaviravādins (Elders), who wished to adhere to what they considered a more orthodox view of the teachings.

Accounts preserved in the Pāli tradition speak of a Third Council held at Pāṭaliputra during the seventeenth year of the reign of King Aśoka (c. 250 B.C.E.). It was instituted by the monk Moggaliputta Tissa, who was chosen to preside over a council of one thousand monks. Both Moggaliputta Tissa and Aśoka emphasized the Sthaviravādin orthodox teachings. According to several accounts, this council led to the withdrawal from the larger Sangha of the school known as the Sarvāstivādins. The Sarvāstivādins, many of whom migrated north and west, established a strong center in Kashmir that flourished for a millennium. The Sarvāstivādins became dominant in the cities along the northern trade route to China, and from there they entered China, exerting a strong influence.

According to at least one account, the Sthaviravādins who prevailed at this council became known as Vibhajyavādins, or 'distinctionists'—those who distinguish between dharmas which 'exist' and dharmas which do not 'exist'. Later this school too divided into different groups.

The Eighteen Schools

The reign of King Aśoka was a fruitful period of expansion for the early Sangha across all of India and Kashmir. One outcome was a division of the Sangha into a number of different schools, traditionally put at eighteen. The division into eighteen schools is said to have been foretold in the time of an earlier Buddha. King Kṛkin saw ten visions, one of which was of a whole piece of cloth being torn into eighteen pieces by different men. Although all ended up with a piece of the cloth, the cloth itself remained whole. The Buddha explained this signified that although the essence of his teachings was one, like the material of the robe, the

teaching itself would be divided. However, all would remain one in the Dharma: all would follow the path to enlightenment.

Some early Buddhist sources list as many as twenty-four schools, but often several different names are used to designate the same school. The various traditions differ concerning the most common names of the groups and their interconnection.

According to one account, during the time of the early Sangha there were four original groups of Śrāvakas, or faithful listeners, who had directly heard the speech of the Buddha and preserved his basic teachings, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. They were the Sthaviravādins, Mahāsāmghikas, Saṃmitīyas, and Sarvāstivādins. Each one of these groups had its own Prātimokṣa, or code of conduct, and collection of Āgamas. The division into eighteen schools can be traced back to this early time.

According to Lama Mi-pham, the division into eighteen schools can be classified under two headings, the Mahāsāmghikas and the Sthaviras. The Mahāsāmghikas split into the Mahāsāmghikas, Ekavyāvahārins, Lokottaravādins, Bahuśrutīyas, Nityavādins, Caitikas, Pūrvaśailikas, and Uttaraśailikas. The Sthaviras divided into Haimavatas, Sarvāstivādins, Hetuvādins, Vatsīputrīyas, Dharmottaras, Bhadrāyānikas, Saṃmitīyas, Bahudeśakas, Dharmadeśakas, and Bhadravārṣikas.

The division into the four groups of Śrāvakas—and eventually eighteen schools—was the result of certain differences in understanding the discipline of the Vinaya as well as disagreement on finer points of the doctrine. There were four general factors which help account for the division into the eighteen schools: (1) geographical circumstances, such as insular or mountainous isolation from external influences, or the exposure to a wide variety of ideas along the trade routes; (2) religious circumstances, such as pilgrims traveling to and from the great holy places; (3) historical influences, such as the favor or disfavor of a prince or dynasty towards a specific school, or the invasion of certain foreign tribes; (4) economic circumstances, such as famines which forced monks to leave a particular domain, or the favor shown by certain rich patrons.

There was never any violent opposition expressed between the monks of the various groups or schools. All considered themselves disciples of the Buddha and agreed upon the Blessed One's general teachings. They distinguished themselves only on secondary points of the doctrine and discipline, so that a rapport existed between members of

different associations. Regardless of the affiliation of the monastery where a traveling monk might stop for the night, he was generally well received according to the traditional practices of compassion, unobscured communication and non-violence (ahimsa).

By the reign of the Pāla Kings (ninth to tenth centuries), only six of the eighteen schools which once flourished in India were still active. Of these only two survive today: the Mūlasarvāstivādin, which considered itself to preserve the root tradition of the Sarvāstivādin school, and the Theravādin, which traces its origin to the original Sthaviravādin school. The Mūlasarvāstivādin lineage became the mainstay of Vinaya practice for the Mahāyāna (the Great Vehicle) as it migrated northward. Today the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya lineage forms the basis for all Vinaya practice in Tibet. The Theravāda found its way to Śrī Lankā and Southeast Asia, where it is still faithfully practiced today.

The Introduction of the Dharma into Kashmir and the Seven Patriarchs

Before he passed into Nirvāṇa, the Buddha made the prophecy in the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra that one hundred years after the Blessed One's passing, a monk with the surname of Madhyāntika would arise to establish the Śrāvaka Piṭaka.

Sometime before the assembly of the Second Council at Vaiśālī, the Ārya Madhyāntika went to Kashmir. There, with the help of his psychic accomplishments, he subdued the Nāga King Auduṣṭa. Through a series of magical acts, and with the aid of the subjugated Nāgas, Madhyāntika converted Kashmir into an important producer of saffron, which enabled the country to increase her wealth considerably.⁶ Because of this act of goodwill the Dharma was readily adopted by the inhabitants of Kashmir. Madhyāntika taught the Dharma in Kashmir for at least fifteen years, and this part of India became an important center for the activity of the seven patriarchs.

This region was soon covered with monasteries for the benefit of the growing Sangha and with commemorative monuments (Stūpas) for

6. Another interpretation is that Madhyāntika introduced the 'saffron culture' (i.e., saffron-colored robes) which is figurative language for the Buddhist Sangha, thus substituting the Dharma in place of the Nāga cults predominant during this time.



Harwan, Kashmir This site was once an important seat of Buddhist learning in Kashmir. Nāgārjuna spent many years here.

the perpetuation of the memory of Śākyamuni Buddha as well as the preservation of relics. The Stūpas consisted of a hemispherical dome fully erect on a flat roof and surrounded by a balustrade. Each was built at a place marking an important event in one of Śākyamuni's previous lives as a Bodhisattva.

After the passing of Madhyāntika, Śānavāsika, the third in the lineage of seven patriarchs, having first journeyed to the cremation ground at Śītavana (bSil-ba'i-tshal), went to Kashmir, where he played an important role. From Śānavāsika the lineage passed to Upagupta, who was instrumental in helping numerous monks attain Arhatship. During this time, King Aśoka supplied the monastic communities in Kashmir with many valuable gifts.

Upon entrusting the Dharma to Ārya Dhītika, Upagupta passed into Nirvāṇa. Dhītika in turn completely maintained the Dharma and entrusted it to Kṛṣṇa, who gave its stewardship to Ārya Mahāsudarśana.

From this point onwards, the Dharma spread widely in Kashmir, and the number of Sangha members grew substantially.

The Vinaya Tradition

The Vinaya, like the Dharma itself, is concerned with the life-world of the individual—one's attitudes, mental training, and general outlook. As it evolved in the history of Buddhism, the Vinaya came to also represent the body of teachings and discipline which determines the outward lives of those who enter the religious order as monks (bhikṣus) or nuns (bhikṣuṇīs).

The Vinaya is essentially a code of conduct that arose from a careful analysis of the actions in daily life which lead one to a particular goal. The Buddha acted according to this code of conduct, not only as an example to others, but also as a natural expression of his own awakening. For both Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna, the conduct specified by the Vinaya code is not merely a means to an end, but a manifestation of that end as an integrated achievement. The Sūtras expounded by the Buddha express the possibility and nature of the goal. They constitute the source of inspiration for the analyses of the Abhidharma as well as the practice of the Vinaya. The Vinaya lineage, which carries on both the living tradition of the Buddha's teachings (lung) and its realization (rtogs), is essential to the preservation of the Buddhadharma, and without Vinaya the Dharma would cease to exist.

As a spiritual course, the Vinaya may be linked to the Śrāvakayāna, the way of those who have heard and accepted the teachings of the Buddha and guide their lives accordingly. Śākyamuni Buddha often related to his disciples the simile of a traveler who found a most beautiful treasure in the jungle and returned to share it with his companions. What he found was not something new; it had been there all the time, but the one who had buried it would not bring it out of the jungle. Like the traveler who returns with the treasure, the Śrāvakayāna as a living transmission represents the very foundation of the Buddhadharma.

This living transmission of the Śrāvakayāna is the Vinaya lineage, which was carried on after the passing away of the Buddha Śākyamuni by Rāhula, his son. The Vinaya lineage of Rāhula was continued in the Mūla-sarvāstivādin tradition; surviving in an unbroken succession for centuries, it eventually made its way to Tibet. This Vinaya lineage was also held by

Mahākāśyapa, who presided over the First Council; his lineage found its way to Ceylon, Burma, and many of the Southeast Asian countries.

Nāgārjuna (c. first–second centuries C.E.) also played a leading role in the development of the Vinaya, introducing a strict discipline for his disciples. It is said that eight thousand monks were once expelled from Nāgārjuna's community when their moral purity was called into doubt. Rāhula's Vinaya lineage was continued by outstanding masters, including the great Abhidharma master Vasubandhu (c. 350 C.E.). Guṇaprabha, Vasubandhu's foremost disciple in the Vinaya, and the Vinayadhara Chos-kyi-bshes-gnyen composed extensive commentaries on the Vinaya. Bhāvaviveka (Bhavya, c. 550 C.E.), a spiritual successor to Nāgārjuna, continued the Vinaya tradition through Śrīgupta who in turn passed it to Jñānagarbha. Jñānagarbha's disciple Śāntarākṣita (c. 750 C.E.) was the first to carry the Vinaya lineage to Tibet. A host of Vinaya masters and translators followed after him.

The Prātimokṣa is the basic code of conduct for the Vinaya lineage. Though the Prātimokṣa was formally codified after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, its principal rules were formulated by the Buddha during his lifetime. Twice monthly, a recitation of the Prātimokṣa served to keep the code fresh in the minds of the Sangha. These recitation sessions also provided the opportunity to acknowledge lapses in adhering to its rules. The Prātimokṣa rules are divided into various sections, classified according to the seriousness of the transgression. The greatest penalty of all is expulsion from the order, and the smallest, a mild reprimand.

The basic code of the Vinaya consists of ten fundamental rules: The first five are binding on laymen, while all ten form the complete collection of precepts for novices. The ten basic rules are to refrain from (1) taking life; (2) taking what is not given; (3) sexual misconduct; (4) lying and false speech; (5) partaking of intoxicants; (6) using adornments, perfumes, and unguents; (7) performing as or watching an actor, juggler, or acrobat (the play of Māyā); (8) sitting or lying on elevated and luxurious couches; (9) eating at certain hours; (10) possessing money, gold, silver, or precious items. In addition, a fully ordained monk conforms his conduct to approximately 240 additional vows, while a nun observes an additional hundred vows.

The Prātimokṣa offers such a thorough stipulation of appropriate behavior that there may seem at first to be no room left for 'personal freedom' or 'spontaneity', for it deals with nearly all aspects of one's life.

However, this attention to what from the Western point of view may seem like minutiae is actually a concern for maximizing essential human values. From the Buddhist point of view, each moment (kṣaṇa) is unique and equally important, insofar as each is an occasion for an action which will either create further karmic entanglement or lead toward liberation. Thus, such ideals as Arhatship or supreme enlightenment are realizations of what is potentially possible for human beings during each moment of being alive.

Ordinary actions are often 'heedless', undertaken with a lack of appreciation of what is given in each moment and leading to action that is inappropriate to the succeeding situation. This in turn fosters further disorientation, so that the tendency for heedlessness becomes self-perpetuating. Disciplined actions, however, lessen the headlong rush of entangling action, and may actually directly embody the value of each moment.

The principles outlined in the two primary philosophical traditions of the Mahāyāna, Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, find their direct application in the practice of Vinaya. For instance, Yogācāra philosophy speaks of a substratum consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) which preserves and resurrects every event. Heedless behavior thus remains a part of the one who does the activity, and it will later reassert itself.

The Vinaya is a method of freeing oneself from actions which will lead to further frustrating and entangling experience. Mādhyamika philosophy accepts that a person's actions and experiences ordinarily occur as part of this law-like process, but it also maintains that each moment is completely open in content and thus neither bears any incriminating past history nor forces the arising of some retributory moral consequence. However, this 'open content' of each moment is difficult to perceive when one is in the midst of entangling activity. The Vinaya provides the chance for a calm and sustained attentiveness that can penetrate to the heart of each momentary presentation.

The Mahāyāna encourages its followers to actively participate in 'work in the world', and for some mature individuals it may be possible to retain balance without the elaborate protection of the full Vinaya refuge. However, the Mahāyāna has also preserved intact the systematic Vinaya of the early schools, adding further and more stringent rules and commitments which are particularly Mahāyāna in scope, such as those concerned with developing Bodhicitta and practicing the Pāramitās.

The Mahāyāna code of Vinaya consists of fifty-eight rules, of which the first ten concern themselves with the most serious offenses, while the remaining forty-eight apply to the lighter transgressions. The first five of the ten serious offenses coincide with the five mentioned above, while the others, as taken from the Brahmajāla-sūtra, are to refrain from (6) speaking of the transgressions of those in the monastic order; (7) praising oneself and deprecating others; (8) avariciousness; (9) showing anger; and (10) speaking against the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha). The forty-eight lighter rules are further developments of the original ten and evidence the free spirit of the Mahāyāna, leading one to the practice of appropriate Bodhisattva action.

The masters of the Vajrayāna must keep additional commitments far beyond those imposed in the Mahāyāna as such. The 'three vows' (trisaṃvāra) of the Vajrayāna include not only the vows of the full Vinaya refuge—for monks, the rules of the Prātimokṣa—but also those practiced by the one following the Bodhisattva course of the Pāramitās, as well as vows of the stringent Tantric code of ethics. The trisaṃvāra unifies the various levels of understanding in Buddhist ethics and morality. It has given rise to many important śāstras such as Sa-skya Paṇḍita's sDom-gsum-rab-dbye.

The Development of Sarvāstivāda and Abhidharma

The doctrines of the Abhidharma played a leading role in the early development of Sarvāstivādin thought. The Sarvāstivādins defined the Abhidharma as an 'analysis of dharma'(dharma-pravicaya) and held that it presented the pure understanding (vimalā-prajñā), as well as the primary source of the teachings. In this way, the Abhidharma was looked upon as the 'highest dharma' (abhi = above).

The Abhidharma presents experience as the total patterning of the interpenetration of 'mind' and 'mental events'. Through a proper understanding of this dynamic functioning, an individual can become free from the confines of conflicting emotions or intellectual opacity. By seeing more clearly how fear, doubt, anger, desire, and other emotional states can control and fragment experience, one can learn to recognize and follow healthier life patterns.

The early community of Sarvāstivādin monks, which was centered around Mathurā, compiled its Tripiṭaka in Sanskrit. The body of Abhi-

dharma literature that they accepted as authoritative later became the major inspiration for Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakoṣa*, as well as subsequent *Abhidharmic* exegesis in China and Tibet. This *Tripiṭaka* was also a major influence on the development of *Mahāyāna* literature. Two very important doctrines of the *Mahāyāna* were already being emphasized in the literature: the practice of the Six *Pāramitās* (transcending functions) and the ideal of the *Bodhisattva*. However, the practitioner was told to imitate rather than become the *Bodhisattva*, for until the rise of the *Mahāyāna* it was held that only a few very rare individuals could set out on the path that led to becoming a Buddha.

The *Mūlasarvāstivādins* arose some time after the reign of King *Kaṇiṣka*, in the first or second century C.E. They considered themselves as returning to the root (*mūla*) teachings of the *Sarvāstivādin* school, which included a stringent *Vinaya* practice. Although their *Vinaya* texts differed from those of the *Sarvāstivādins* in their use of relatively pure Sanskrit, the *Vinaya* lineage of this school traced back directly to the Buddha's son, *Rāhula*.

The Chinese *Sarvāstivādin* *Vinaya* contains an additional section on the subject of *Bodhisattva* conduct and other matters relevant to the code of *Vinaya* adopted by the *Mahāyāna*. These presumably later additions in the *Prātimokṣa* can be found in the *Upālipariṣcchā-sūtra*, as well as at the end of the Chinese translation of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* *Vinaya*. The Tibetan translation of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* *Vinaya*, which does not contain these additions, appears to adhere most closely to the original text.

In the formation of the *Sarvāstivādin* school, the patriarch *Upagupta* (c. 250 B.C.E.)—author of the *Netrṣpada-śāstra*—played a major role. According to several Chinese sources and other accounts, in the second century B.C.E., representatives of the *Saṅgha* community assembled at *Puruṣapura* on the suggestion of *Kātyāyanīputra* and King *Vāsiṣka*. The assembly was principally attended by the *Sarvāstivādins* and presided over by the *Bhadanta Vasumitra*⁷, who was assisted by *Aśvaghoṣa*. The purpose of the assembly was to determine which interpretations of the *Dharma* were correct. Of the accepted teachings, about one million

7. The title *Bhadanta* refers to prominent members of the *Hīnayāna* Buddhist hierarchy. While they rank below *Arhats* in spiritual excellence, they are often founders of schools, propagators of *Dharma*, or well-known authors. Although *Vasumitra* held only the title *Bhadanta*, he was one of the most prominent enlightened masters of his time.

ślokas were collected in order to compose commentaries on them. Upon completion, these accepted commentaries were carved in stone to assure their preservation.

This assembly, consisting of five hundred Arhats and five hundred Bodhisattvas, was attended by Ghoṣaka and Buddhadeva. Bhadanta Dharmatrāta and Dharmasrī, who were also members of the council, later became highly respected in Gandhāra as 'western masters' (pāścātyas) of the early Sarvāstivādin school. Vasumitra (dByig-bshes), Ghoṣaka (dByangs-sgrog, author of the *Abhidharmāmṛta-śāstra*), Dharmatrāta (Chos-skyob, author of the *Pañcavastuvibhāṣa-śāstra*), and Buddhadeva (Sangs-rgyas-lha) compiled the results of this assembly into a written record of the controversy.

Three huge commentaries were composed. One of these, the *Vibhāṣā* (*Abhidharma-vibhāṣā-śāstra*), was a commentary on the most important book of the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma Piṭaka, the *Jñāna-prasthāna*, compiled by Ārya Kātyāyanīputra, who probably lived around the first or second century B.C.E.⁸

8. All of the Abhidharma teachings as delineated by the Buddha are included in the seven fundamental texts of the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma Piṭaka:

1. *Jñāna-prasthāna-śāstra*, by Kātyāyanīputra
2. *Saṅgīti-paryāya*, by Mahākausthila
3. *Dharmaskandha*, by Śāriputra
4. *Prajñaptipāda*, by Maudgalyāyana
5. *Vijñānakāya*, by Devaśarman
6. *Dhātukāya*, by Pūrṇa
7. *Prakaraṇapāda*, by Vasumitra

Among these seven treatises, the *Dharmaskandha* and the *Saṅgīti-paryāya* were compiled before the lines of thought that later set the Sarvāstivādins apart from the other schools had gained maturity. With the *Prajñapti-śāstra*, the doctrines of the Sarvāstivādins gained influence. Following these works came the *Vijñānakāya* and the *Dhātukāya*, and then finally the *Prakaraṇa-pada* and the *Jñāna-prasthāna*, which represent the last stage of development of Sarvāstivādin thought. In his *Abhidharmakoṣa*, Vasubandhu considers the *Prakaraṇapāda* as important a treatise as the *Jñāna-prasthāna*, and on it he based some important classifications which he utilized in the *Koṣa*.

All seven of these works were condensed into the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, the commentary compiled at Puruṣapura. Two forms of this text survive in Chinese translation: the *Abhidharma-vibhāṣa-śāstra* and the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra*, a huge text in one hundred thousand ślokas. Both forms quote the diverging points of view raised by the differing schools and refutes them by making reference to appropriate passages in the *Jñāna-prasthāna*. The *Vibhāṣā/Mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra* strongly influenced the emergence of the *Vaibhāṣikas* (*Bye-brag-smra-ba*).

The Vibhāṣā in turn was summarized by Vasubandhu in his Abhidharma-koṣa (mNgon-pa-mdzod). In eight chapters and an appendix on the self, the Koṣa sets forth all the Abhidharma teachings, serving as the primary source for the Abhidharma tradition from the Hīnayāna point of view.

Chapter one of the Koṣa concerns existence (khams, dhātu) and contains a general classification of experience. Chapter two elucidates inherent powers (dbang-po, indriya) such as the senses, which are the fundamental attributes that determine our 'growth'. Chapter three presents the Buddhist cosmological vision of the world as the total environment ('jig-rten, loka). Chapter four deals with the relationship our actions (las, karma) have in determining our world of experience. Chapter five concerns the latent tendencies (phra-rgyas, anuṣaya) and the pervasive emotional tendencies (kun-nas-nyon-mongs, saṅkleśa) of our experience. Chapter six sets forth the Buddhist path (lam, mārga) to liberation. Chapter seven presents pristine wisdom (ye-shes, jñāna) as a learning process. Chapter eight deals with the integration of the personality (snyoms-'jug, samāpatti). And chapter nine, which was written separately, is a refutation of the notion of an independently existing 'puḍgala' or personality (gang-zag). Important commentaries and explanatory treatises on the Abhidharma-koṣa were written by Saṅghabhadra, Dignāga, Sthiramati, Yaśomitra, Vasumitra, and others.

The most important work on Abhidharma from a Mahāyāna point of view is the Abhidharma-samuccaya (Kun-las-btus-pa) by Asaṅga, which summarizes the teachings of the Abhidharma in the light of the three Yānas. It defines all the subjects of the Abhidharma and investigates all the elements of existence from the perspective of the Great Vehicle. The Abhidharma-samuccaya is said to be a condensation of the over one million aspects of the Abhidharma that were taught to Asaṅga by Maitreya. Asaṅga's disciple Buddhasiṃha wrote a bhāṣya (commentary) to the text, which further elucidated various points. Later, Sthiramati brought together Asaṅga's basic text and the bhāṣya to form the Abhidharma-samuccaya-vyākhyā. The Sanskrit edition of this work remained extant in Tibet until recent times.

The development of the Abhidharma stimulated a strong literary tradition in both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna. As one of the three divisions of the Tripiṭaka, its basic tenets have not only been accepted by all schools from the time of the Buddha to the present day, but have been central themes in the development of all Buddhist philosophical systems.

The Development of the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika

Elements of specialization in the Dharma can be seen from very early times. At the first council after the Parinirvāṇa, Ānanda was requested to recite the Sūtras, while Upāli recited the Vinaya, and Mahākāśyapa the Abhidharma. The task of memorizing the different portions of the Tripiṭaka was entrusted to various Sangha associations that bore names descriptive of their particular acquisitions. In the course of time, these groups took on distinctive characteristics and became known for specific doctrines they emphasized. Eventually they developed into separate schools. The Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas are examples of schools that took form in this way.

When the Buddha's teachings began to be written down, the Sūtras were written in a discursive style which made use of the simile, the metaphor, and the anecdote. The Sautrāntikas, in making a persistent effort to adhere strictly to the original discourses as primary sources (sūtra-pramāṇika), accepted only this body of literature as doctrinal authority. The non-discursive style, which employed a very select, precise, and impersonal terminology, came to characterize the texts of the Abhidharma Piṭaka, which became a foundation for the Vaibhāṣika teachings.

The Vaibhāṣikas may be called 'orthodox' Sarvāstivādins who accepted as highly authoritative certain key commentaries (vibhāṣa) on the Abhidharma. Like the Sarvāstivādins, the Vaibhāṣikas held that all elements of experience (dharmas) exist, and that their past and future states are real. Later Vaibhāṣikas elaborated on various points which the Mahāvibhāṣā had left open to dispute. They honored the opinions of Bhadanta Vasumitra and held the Udānavarga of Dharmatrāta in high regard.

The original compilers of the Mahāvibhāṣā—Vasumitra, Ghoṣaka, Dharmatrāta, and Buddhadeva—composed other principal works and doctrines of the Vaibhāṣikas, especially the Trayamiśraṇa-mālā (Lung-ni-spel-ma-gsum-gyi phreng-ba, the Garland of Three Mixtures) and the Śata-upadeśa (gDams-ngag-brgya-ba, A Hundred Teachings). Each of these important Vaibhāṣika masters had one hundred thousand disciples.

The two main centers of activity for the Vaibhāṣikas were Gandhāra (the Paścātyas) and Kashmir. Buddhāmītra, who was Vasubandhu's first Abhidharma teacher, was an important master in Gandhāra. Skandhila, author of the Abhidharmāvatāra, and Saṅghabhadra contributed two

major works to the Buddhist tradition: The Samaya of Light (Samaya-pradīpika) and the Nyāyānusāra-śāstra. The former details the principles of the Vaibhāṣika, and the latter is principally a refutation of the Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya.

The Kashmiri Vaibhāṣikas considered the seven Abhidharma works of the Sarvāstivādins to be an organized compilation of the direct words (Āgama) of the Buddha, based on actual discourses delivered by the Enlightened One to specific groups or individuals and committed to memory by the original Arhats or Śrāvakas.

During about the second century B.C.E. the Sautrāntika branched off from the Sarvāstivāda. The traditional branch of the Sautrāntikas generally refuted the ideas common to the two long-lived Abhidharma traditions, the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda, as well as those additional lines of thought followed by the Vaibhāṣikas. Instead, they accepted the Sūtras as the only authoritative source of the Buddha's teachings. For a second branch of the Sautrāntikas, epistemological questions were of primary concern, and in pursuing them they too made use of an Abhidharma style of inquiry.

The origin of the Sautrāntikas can be traced back to Kumāralāta, (most likely a native of Takṣaśilā) who appeared about one century after the Parinirvāṇa. He is said to have authored the Dṛṣṭāntamālā-śāstra, the Garland of Similes, as well as hundreds of other widely circulated texts. The famed seventh century Chinese pilgrim and translator Hsüan-tsang referred to Kumāralāta (known to the Chinese as Kumāralabha) as one of the 'Four Shining Suns' (Aśvaghōṣa in the east, Āryadeva in the south, Nāgārjuna in the west, and Kumāralāta in the north).

Kumāralāta was one of the first to explain the teachings of the Buddha through the use of the simile. In the literature of this period, the dṛṣṭānta (example or illustration) is set against the Sūtrānta or Sūtras, for which it serves as a complement or illustration. The name Darṣṭāntika, ascribed to the followers of Kumāralāta, was probably given to them by their opponents. Taking offense at being called Darṣṭāntikas or 'exemplifiers', the later followers of the line of thought formulated by Kumāralāta took the title of Sautrāntika (mDo-sde-pa). Many quotations in the Mahāvibhāṣā are taken from the Darṣṭāntika, but the name Sautrāntika is mentioned only twice, suggesting the school became known by that name only later.

Śrīlāta (dPal-Idan), who appeared sometime in the third century C.E., stands with Kumāralāta as one of the original masters of the Sautrāntika, having contributed a number of original treatises to the developing Sautrāntika line of thought. He composed the Sautrāntika-vibhāṣā and was referred to as the 'sthavira' by the one-time teacher (and later opponent) of Vasubandhu, Saṅghabhadra.

After the time of Vasubandhu, the Sautrāntikas divided themselves into two groups: those who followed the discourses or Sūtras alone and those who followed logical investigation which was not necessarily spoken directly by the Buddha. Thus, the later Sautrāntikas differed from the earlier Sautrāntikas in their growing acceptance of the credibility of Abhidharma literature. However, they still held the view that the Sūtras were the only authoritative doctrinal source.

Events Surrounding the Rise of Buddhism in India

The Buddhist Sangha adopted much of the Indian culture. The Buddha himself showed respect to the sacred places of the Brahmins and encouraged his followers to do the same. But, in believing that all human beings had an equal opportunity to attain enlightenment, the Buddha taught that the sacred teachings should be available to all people, not just the priestly or brahmanic caste. The Blessed One spoke in the common languages of the time to all who were receptive to his words, regardless of social station or level of education. Those who followed his teachings left behind the dictates of the traditional caste system, together with its privileges and obligations.

Distinctions of caste originated during the Vedic period, when the Āryan invaders took control of India. During this development of a new cultural tradition, India experienced great social transformations. Gradually, the early Āryan hierarchies settled into what became the four basic classes (varṇa) of Indian society. They are: the Brahmin, or priestly class; the Kṣatriya, or warrior class; the Vaiśya, or agricultural class (which in later times became the merchant class); and the Śūdra, or servant class. In addition to these four, there were the 'outsiders' or mleccha, which included anyone outside the framework of the Indian social system. Brahmanism, which provided a philosophical foundation for the caste system, was the principal religious force active during the time of the Buddha. In spite of this, many powerful rulers, including Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, were swayed by the Buddha's teachings.

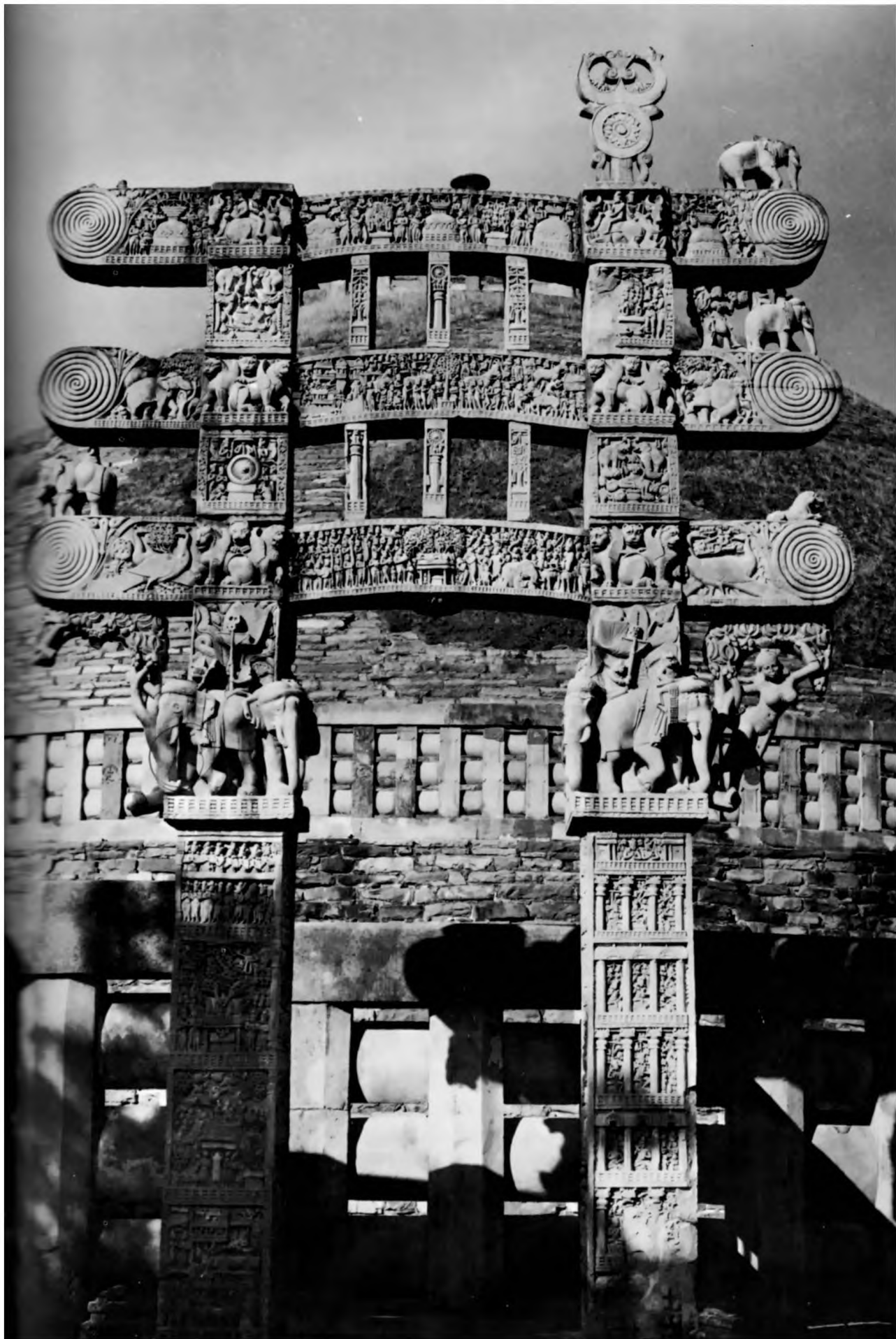


The Sāncī Stūpa (above) and its Eastern Gate (opposite) The various elements of this stūpa together with its outer wall and four gates were constructed over two centuries. The gates depict birth stories and major events in the life of the Buddha.

Several years before the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, King Bimbisāra was assassinated by his son, Ajātaśatru. Although he later became a Buddhist, Ajātaśatru continued his father's policy of expansion through military conquest. Shortly after the Buddha's passing, Ajātaśatru conquered the Vṛji Republic, the homeland of the Licchavi clan. Whatever their origin may have been as residents of the Himalayan foothills, the Vṛjis were related to the Śākya tribe and appear to have had affiliations with Nepal and Tibet from the time of gNya'-khri-btsan-po, the first king of Tibet (c. 247 B.C.E.) onwards.

The successor to King Ajātaśatru, his son Udāyibhadra, transferred the capital of Magadha to Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna). During this period, the Magadhan Empire continued to expand and was recognized as the most powerful force in eastern and central India. The Buddhadharma spread towards Mathurā and the region between Magadha and the sea near Campā. Elements of the indigenous culture of the neighboring provinces were incorporated into the teachings of the local schools.

Following the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa, the Dharma he taught provided the inspiration for the erection of great holy places. Remains of monu-



ments and shrines throughout India testify to the patronage of numerous influential kings like Bimbisāra (c. 542–490 B.C.E.) and Ajātaśatru (c. 490–458 B.C.E.). Early Buddhist art produced some of the finest examples of Indian architecture, among which is the Stūpa at Sāñcī, built around the first or second century B.C.E. Even more magnificent was the Stūpa of Amarāvati, which, when completed at the end of the second century C.E., was adorned with carved panels portraying the life of the Buddha. From this period onward, Stūpas, which preserved relics of the Buddha and his disciples, were erected in all Buddhist lands.

Buddhist paintings and sculpture adorned palaces as well as temples, and some of the frescoes and paintings of this period, such as the wall paintings of Ajañtā, survive to this day. The collection of twenty-nine Ajañtā caves, constructed between the first and seventh centuries C.E., preserve a variety of scenes from the Jātakas (tales of the Buddha's former lives), as well as scenes depicting the life of the times. The Ellorā caves, located near Ajañtā, consist of approximately forty caves. Constructed between the fifth and eighth centuries, they contain Buddhist carvings and stone sculptures, some of the finest examples of Indian art.

The survival of Indian Buddhism, as well as the survival of its art, was chiefly dependent upon the patronage of kings and wealthy lay people. Histories of India describe how from the time of the Buddha onward, certain kings supported Buddhism and played significant roles in its continuation. One of the most important of these rulers was King Aśoka, who rose to great power and influence around the middle of the third century B.C.E.

Aśoka (Mya-ngan-med) consolidated the Mauryan empire which had been founded by his grandfather Candragupta. Greatly superior to his neighbors in wealth and military strength, Aśoka expanded this empire through warfare, which culminated in the conquest of Kalinga. He became converted to Buddhism shortly thereafter; attracted to the Buddha's peaceful teachings, he dedicated himself to non-violence and spread the blessings of harmony throughout his kingdom. He gave up hunting, the traditional sport of kings, and served two and a half years as a lay disciple (upāsaka). Through his transformation he demonstrated the power and strength of a truly benign ruler committed to the welfare of all beings in his land.

Aśoka supported the religious communities of the Brahmins, Jains, and Ājīvikas as well as the Buddhists. It was his duty as emperor to remain unattached and unbiased toward any religion, although he did use

Buddhism to unify his dominion. When we think of Aśoka, we may recall the time-honored inscriptions or edicts that he had placed throughout the provinces of India. At Lumbinī Grove, he had a pillar erected commemorating the birthplace of the Buddha. Similar edicts, written mostly in Prakrit dialects, were placed on rocks, in caves, and on specially built pillars from the northwest regions of Afghanistan to the Bay of Bengal, and southward nearly as far as Madras and Mysore. These edicts, which were placed throughout Aśoka's kingdom, are some of the oldest forms of Indian documents. They generally describe the Buddhist way of life and proper social action, emphasizing the practice of compassion and equal justice to all living beings.

Aśoka erected a temple in the village which was the birthplace of Śāriputra and which later became the site of Nālandā University. During one of his pilgrimages he also made repairs on Śāriputra's Stūpa. He demonstrated the virtues of the Buddhist path in many ways, and through his royal support, Buddhism began its career as a world religion.

The Buddhadharma spread in two opposite directions from the Magadhan Empire. First it went towards the west, taking roots at Kauśāmbī, the center of the Sthaviras; then it went to Mathurā, to the northwest, and on to Kashmir. Mathurā became the center of the Sarvāstivādins, while in Kashmir the study and practice of the Mūla-sarvāstivādin Vinaya blossomed and spread widely. Aśoka's influence extended to all the neighboring kingdoms, which he encouraged to follow the teachings of the Buddhadharma. It was at Aśoka's directive that his son, a Buddhist monk, led the mission to Śrī Laṅkā (the island kingdom south of India) that resulted in King Devānāmpiya Tissa's conversion to Buddhism.

According to the Brahmanical sources, Aśoka's successor, Saṃpadin, was a Jain. Saṃpadin's successor, Śāliśūka (c. 215–202 B.C.E.), who reestablished the cultural order set forth by Aśoka, was probably a Buddhist. It seems unlikely, however, that Śāliśūka was as militarily aware as Aśoka, for during his reign India's northwest frontier, including the region of Gandhāra, came under Hellenistic domination.

Almost a century before the reign of Aśoka, Alexander the Great had overthrown the Persian Empire (c. 325 B.C.E.), laying claim to the northwest of India. But with Alexander's departure, these militarily weak territories were easily taken over by King Candragupta, and hence they became part of the empire inherited by Aśoka.



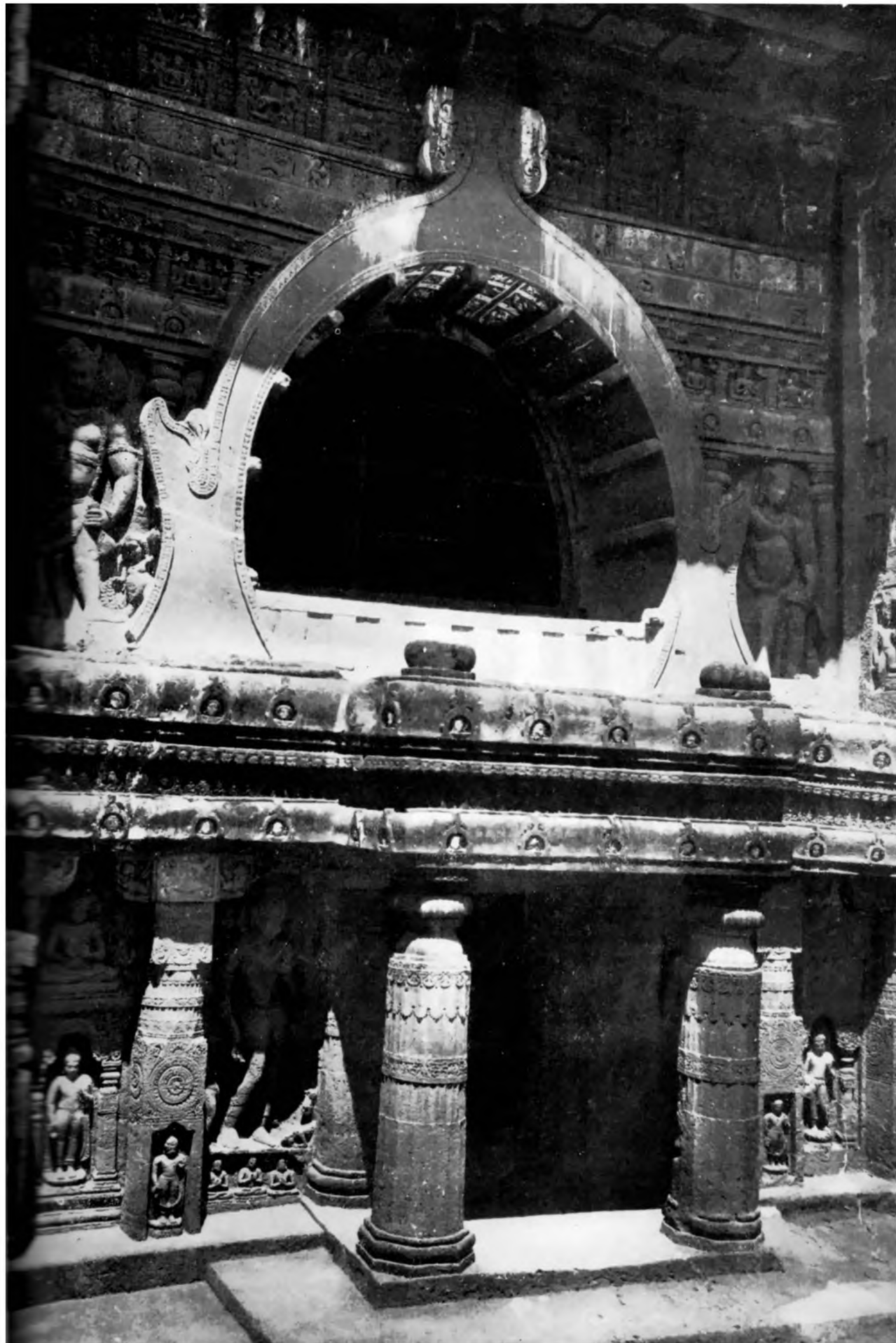
The Ajañtā Caves (above and opposite) These magnificent works of stone carved in the sides of the Ajañtā hills are filled with innumerable relief sculptures and paintings.

After the death of Alexander, Seleucus Nicator, his successor, gained much power over the Macedonian Empire. Once again he attempted to bring the military might of the Greeks to India's gates. His army engaged Candragupta's forces around the year 305 B.C.E., only to face defeat and the loss of their newly won territories, including parts of Persia, Afghanistan, and the Punjab. The Indians and Greeks formed a healthy alliance after this battle, and Candragupta became ruler of almost the entire Indian continent.

During and shortly after the reign of Aśoka, many events were occurring to the west of India which would radically affect the peace of the Macedonian Empire. India was now entering an era during which it would suffer from recurring invasions by various forces outside its domain.⁹

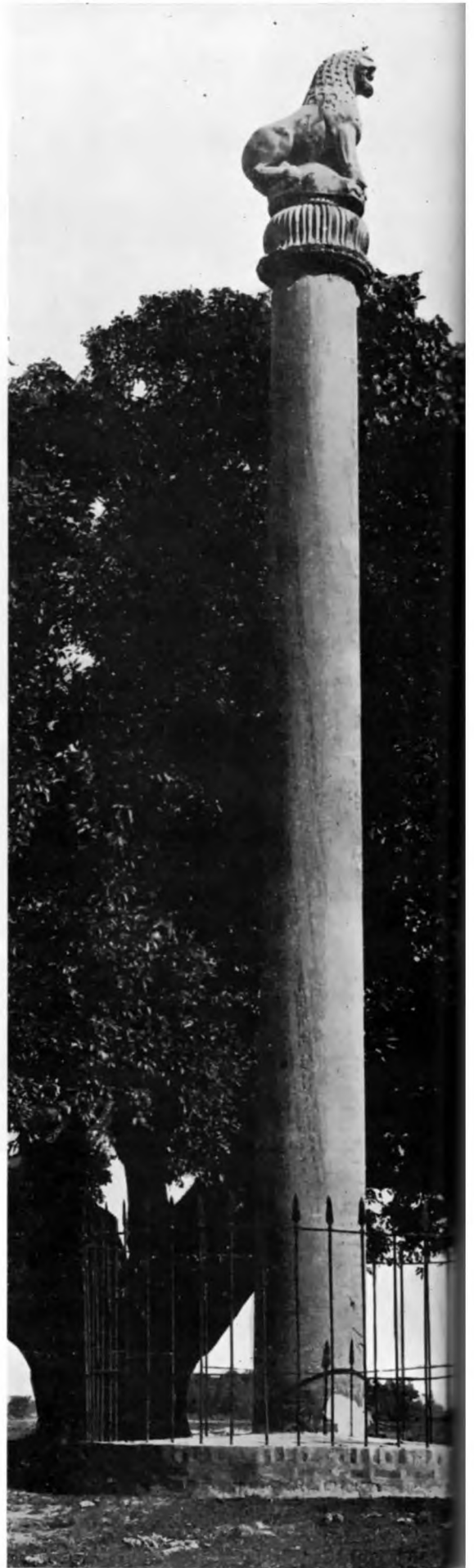
Once the Iranian province of Parthia gained independence, the enthusiastic Parthians seized control of Persia and pushed onward until they were stopped by the Romans in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). India was first affected by these western invaders when a small colony of Greeks established themselves in Bactria and declared themselves independent

9. It should be noted that India, as we know it today, was rarely a political unity, not even during the famous Gupta Dynasty. It was, however, a cultural unity.





Aśokan Pillars: The Lion's Capital (above), now in Sārnāth; the Lion column (to the right) at Lauriya-Nandangarh Many such pillars were built by King Aśoka throughout India, marking important places such as Lumbinī, where the Buddha was born, and the future site of Nālandā, honored in Aśoka's time as the birthplace of Śāriputra.



of the Empire formed by Seleucus Nicator. This new independence must have encouraged the rebellious Bactrian Greeks to invade, for they successfully took over parts of Afghanistan up to the Hindu Kush, which was India's northwest frontier. Following this, the Bactrian Emperor Demetrius and his successor Demetrius II pushed their forces southeast into the Punjab. There they occupied much of the Indus valley, thus establishing Indo-Greek power in northwestern India.

One of the most noted emperors in Buddhist sources was King Menander, whose military might penetrated well beyond the Punjab to Pāṭaliputra around 150 B.C.E. There were already indications at this time that a few of the Greek invaders supported Buddhism, and Menander was one of them. Menander, also known as Milinda, became the patron of the Buddhist philosopher-monk Nāgasena. The king's long dialogues with Nāgasena on the Buddha's basic teachings were recorded in the *Milinda-pañhā* ('The Questions of Milinda'), a well-known Pāli text. In the literary sense, this text suggests that the Greek form of dialogue had an influence on Indian literature.

Although the ruling power of the Greeks in India waned after Menander's death (c. 130 B.C.E.), the Greek cultural influences lived on. By the sixth century C.E., India had fully adopted the Greek sciences and had even gone beyond the Greeks in many areas of scholastic precision. It was the Indians who invented the concept of zero and developed both the decimal system and Algebra. The Arabs later took these ideas from the Indians, and during the Dark Ages carried them to Europe, where the foundation for modern mathematics was laid.

The Greek occupation of the northwest opened India to ideas from Persia and beyond. The Greeks had a substantial effect upon India in the areas of commerce and trade. They showed the Indians how to mint coins of superb craftsmanship, and they developed the graceful forms of Gandhāran Buddhist art, which enhanced monasteries for a number of centuries.

Meanwhile, to the east of India, China was being troubled by Turkish tribes. About 175 B.C.E. the Yüeh-chih, later known as the Kuṣāṇas, were driven from their homes in northwestern China and began their migrations across Central Asia. By about 100 B.C.E. they had driven the Śakas out of the Greek Bactrian kingdom. During the next century they established an empire which controlled the entire Indus Valley, northern and central India as far as Mathurā and Vārāṇasī.



Kaniṣka, a prominent Kuṣāṇa emperor during the first or second century C.E., became a patron of Buddhism, and with his support the Sarvāstivādins became well-established in the regions of Mathurā and Kashmir. This was the time of the distinguished scholars Vasumitra and Buddhadeva. During this period, while the Sarvāstivādin doctrines were being codified into the Mahāvibhāṣā, the Mahāyāna doctrines were becoming more widely known.

Kaniṣka's empire extended over the western half of northern India as far as Vārāṇasī and over much of the Indus basin and upper Ganges valleys, including Kashmir, Afghanistan, and parts of what is now Chinese Turkestan. Kaniṣka's capital was at Puruṣapura, which was the site of the tallest Stūpa in India. Although the Kuṣāṇa Empire was militarily ruled, this was a period of welcome peace and prosperity for northern India, which facilitated a rapid expansion of the Buddhist Sangha.

By the third century C.E., the great empires of the Kuṣāṇas had nearly disappeared. Historians indicate that this occurred because, due to the stability created by the Kuṣāṇa empire, the provincial governors managed to sever their ties with the central government and to become feudal lords. It is unclear exactly why the Kuṣāṇa government became so decentralized. However, this change was at least temporarily advantageous for Buddhism, as the feudal lords could now support the various Buddhist Sanghas on a more individualized basis.

The rule of the Kuṣāṇas was assumed by the individual governors, most of whom consisted of the conquered Śakas, who took this opportunity in their role as 'vassal kings' to rebel against their overlords. At the same time, early in the third century C.E., a vigorous new military force in Persia, the Sāsānian Dynasty, arose and invaded Afghanistan, which at that time was under the rule of the Kuṣāṇas. Eventually, these invaders reached the territory of Gandhāra, a trespass which contributed greatly to the downfall of the Kuṣāṇa empire. From the downfall of the Kuṣāṇa empire onwards, northern India did not become politically unified again until the rise of the Gupta Dynasty in the fourth century. The Persian rulers remained quite active in Afghanistan and Gandhāra until they were overthrown by the Turks in the seventh century.



The Later Development of Buddhism in India

The Two Most Excellent Ones and the Six Ornaments of India

Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga are traditionally known as the ‘Two Most Excellent Ones’, while Āryadeva, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, Guṇaprabha, and Śākyaprabha are known as the ‘Six Ornaments’. During the development of Buddhism in India, the influence of these eight outstanding masters was unparalleled.

Nāgārjuna Nāgārjuna (Klu-sgrub) was born into a Brahmin family in Vidarbha in southern India, at a time variously estimated at between the first century B.C.E. and the second century C.E. The Buddha predicted Nāgārjuna’s appearance in the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra:

After I, the Buddha, have passed away,
Four hundred years will elapse,
And then a monk called Nāga will appear.
He will be devoted to the Doctrine
And be of great benefit to it.
He will attain the Stage of Perfect Bliss,
Live for six hundred years,
And will secure the mystic knowledge
Of the Mahāmāyūrī Tantra.
He will know the subjects of the different sciences,
And expound the teaching of non-substantiality.
And after he has cast away his bodily frame,
He will be reborn in the region of Sukhāvātī.
And finally, he will attain Buddhahood.

There are other predictions about Nāgārjuna in the Mahāyāna Sūtras. For example, the Laṅkāvatāra says:

In the southern country of Vedalya
A monk glorious and greatly renowned
Whose name is sounded Nāga
Will put an end to extreme views.
And after he has taught in this world
My teaching—that of the Great Vehicle,
Of which there is none higher—
He will secure the Stage of Perfect Bliss
And pass away into the Sukhāvātī Heaven.

When Nāgārjuna was a newborn child, an astrologer predicted that the child would come to a premature death. By offering feasts to the Brahmin priests, the infant's life was extended to seven months. The soothsayers predicted that with additional offerings, it could be extended to seven years, but absolutely no longer. His parents conducted the feasts, but at the end of the seventh year, they could no longer bear the prospect of beholding their son dead, so they sent him forth to wander with a servant. Their son traveled throughout southern India until eventually he beheld the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who led him to the gates of Nālandā, the great Buddhist university and monastery. There he met the Brāhmaṇa Saraha (Rāhulabhadra), to whom he told his story. This teacher suggested a means for prolonging his life: reciting the mantra of Amitāyus, the Buddha of Long Life and Conqueror of Yāma, the Lord of Death. The boy did so during a special sādhana on the eve of his eighth birthday. To the great joy of his parents, he was thereby delivered from the Lord of Death. Soon afterwards he was ordained by Saraha, taking the name Śrīman.

According to Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal, Padmasambhava's consort and foremost disciple, Nāgārjuna's father was a great yogi king named Balin, who was learned in medicine. The king had a son by each of his two wives. He taught all his knowledge of medicine to the son of the elder wife, but to Nāgārjuna he taught nothing. When he was about to retire, Balin announced that he would relinquish his throne to whichever son had the greater knowledge of medicine.

The younger wife wept bitterly, for she knew her son had no chance. So, to make his mother happy, Nāgārjuna decided to win the contest. Going to a nearby cemetery, Nāgārjuna met Guru Padmasambhava who was residing there, and from the Guru he learned the five basic kinds of



Nāgārjuna

medicine, plus the five higher kinds which were profoundly secret and studied only cursorily by the king himself. The contest between the sons took the form of a public examination, with the son of the elder wife taking the first turn. He expounded each of the five kinds of medicine in turn, explicitly and implicitly, and inspired the audience with awe at his comprehensive knowledge. They said to one another: "By diligent application, the prince has truly absorbed the wisdom of the father; just as the moon illumines the night sky, he has revealed the totality of knowledge. Of what use is it to listen to the other son who has received no teachings?"

Undaunted and full of confidence in Padmasambhava, the second son began his recital. Like the endless breakers of a vast ocean, his understanding rolled again and again over the assembly, overwhelming

even King Balin with its power. After elucidating the worldly sciences, the second son spoke of the noble doctrines of the Buddhadharma with such great skill that Devas, Nāgas, and Dākinīs came to make obeisance. Now the people said, “Even though the first son is like the moon in its fullness, the second is like the sun, whose splendor is incomparable!” Overwhelmed by these sentiments, King Balin touched his head to his son’s feet, declaring him successor to the throne. But the boy had no thirst for worldly power, so he left home to study further with Guru Padma-sambhava. After this, he wrote many works on Sūtra, Mantra, and Tantra, and was known by the name Siddhiphala, or ‘Result of Realization’.

Around this same time, Dharmarāja Buddhapakṣa had a minister named Kakutsiddha who built a temple at Nālandā. For its dedication, Kakutsiddha arranged a lavish ceremonial feast, inviting everyone from the entire region. Two non-Buddhist beggars wandered by and asked for some morsels of food, but certain of the young monks showered them with garbage and set vicious dogs on them. Greatly angered, the beggars vowed retribution and made plans for revenge. They decided that only one of them would continue to beg, freeing the other to engage in continuous sūrya-siddha-sādhana, whereby he would propitiate the sun and be empowered with its energy.

After twelve years spent in a deep pit, he perfected this practice. He climbed out of the hole and scattered magic ashes all around, causing a miraculously-produced flame to emerge and engulf all the eighty-four temples of Nālandā which stood nearby. All the buildings, shrines, images, and texts caught fire, nearly destroying all vestiges of the Dharma. However, on the ninth story of one of the larger temples were the Anuttara-yoga Tantras; from these texts issued forth streams of cool water which quenched the all-consuming fire. After this, the two beggars escaped in the direction of Siam, but were themselves consumed by the self-kindled flames of their own deeds. The fire was a great setback for the propagation of the Dharma, since more than three quarters of all the Buddhist literature was destroyed; only about one fifteenth of all the Mahāyāna works remained. For example, only one chapter of the Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra was preserved (which we regard today as its entirety), and only thirty-eight of the one thousand chapters of the Avataṃsaka-sūtra survived.

The smoke from this great conflagration caused Mucilinda, the king of the Nāgas, to become very ill. His condition became increasingly desperate, and Siddhiphala, the foremost doctor in all of Jambudvīpa, was finally summoned. The Great Doctor had little difficulty in healing

Mucilinda, and as a reward, Mucilinda opened the treasury of the Seven Jewels, giving him the greater part of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra in one hundred thousand verses. The Nāga king had been guarding this text ever since Ānanda had entrusted it to him for future revelation. Later, Siddhiphala returned to the Nāga realm for the rest of this Sūtra and for many others preserved only there. Thus he received the name Nāgārjuna.

The significance of Nāgārjuna's name was outlined sometime later by his well-known follower Candrakīrti, in the preface to the Prasannapadā, his treatise on Madhayamaka entitled 'The Clear Worded':

I bow before that Nāgārjuna who has rejected
The adherence to the two extreme points of view,
Who has become born in the ocean of Dharmadhātu,
And who from compassion has expounded all the depths
Of the Treasury of the Highest Teaching as he has known it himself.
The fires of his Doctrine consume the fuel
Of every contradictory, conflicting view;
While its brilliance dispels until this very day
The mental darkness of the entire world.
His incomparable wisdom and words, like the weapons of the mighty,
Secure for him sovereignty over the three spheres of existence,
Over all the world of converts, including the gods,
And vanquish the host of enemies—the hosts of Phenomenal Existence.

Just as the Nāgas live in the ocean,
So does Nāgārjuna live in the ocean of Dharmadhātu.
Just as the Nāgas have no permanent place of abiding,
Neither does Nāgārjuna hold either of the extreme views.
While the Nāgas possess great treasures of jewels and gold,
Nāgārjuna possesses the unsurpassable Jewel of the Dharma,
The Wish-Fulfilling Gem,
With a single glance, like the glow of their fiery eyes,
He penetrates the whole of existence.
This is why he is called Nāga.
Since he has subdued the sinful powers of the world
And acts as guardian of the Dharma realms,
He is called Ārjuna, holder of power.

Nāgārjuna began his studies at Nālandā under the guidance of Rāhulabhadra (Sāraha), who was one of the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas and a direct disciple of the Buddha's son Rāhula. Rāhulabhadra learned the Mahāyāna Sūtras and Outer Tantras principally from the Yi-dam, tutelary deities who were appointed by the Buddha to safeguard these teachings

and practices. Nāgārjuna studied so extensively and became so respected that in a short time he was made the abbot of Nālandā University. Under Nāgārjuna's guidance, Nālandā's fame soon equaled that of Vajrāsana (Bodh Gayā).

Although it is not completely accurate to say that Nāgārjuna was the founder of the Mādhyamika philosophy, he brought to maturity the teachings propounded by his teacher Rāhulabhadra, which later became the basis for the Mādhyamika school. Nāgārjuna composed a great number of texts, both commentaries and original works, based on the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras. It was he who clarified the inner meaning of madhyama, the middle path taught by the Buddha, which rejects both aspects of any dualistic belief; in particular, the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism. Through the use of carefully honed logic, Nāgārjuna developed a dialectic which can prevent any reasonable person from falling into false views.

By exposing the logical fallacy of clinging to any form of dualistic belief or any philosophical extreme, he gave to all who are capable of reason a medicine to apply to the dis-ease of sentient beings. He applied the Dharma through his knowledge of subjects ranging from logic (nyāya) and dialectical argumentation to magic, medicine, chemistry, alchemy, and government. Demonstrating his superior knowledge in debates with the non-Buddhists (tīrthikas), he caused the teachings of the Mahāyāna to shine like the sun.

The Tibetan canon lists about 180 works attributed to Nāgārjuna. Among the many diverse texts are six metaphysical treatises which later became the fundamental texts of the Mādhyamika philosophy. They are: Śūnyatāsaptati, Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā, Yuktiṣāṣṭhikā, Vighrahavyāvartanī, Vaidalyasūtra, and Vyavaharasiddhi. These texts include the subjects of logic, epistemology, sources of valid knowledge, and relative and ultimate truth (saṃvṛti-satya and paramārtha-satya).

Nāgārjuna also wrote texts which served to critically evaluate the doctrines of the other Buddhist schools, such as the Sarvāstivādins. Many of these works deal specifically with the practical side of the Doctrine, while others implement the tools of logic, thus clearing away confusion and making way for unobscured understanding. Nāgārjuna also wrote two important 'letters', the Ratnāvalī and the Suhrillekha, which outline the chief points of conduct for the layman. Another of his texts is known

as the *Pratīyasamutpāda-hṛdaya-śāstra*, an exposition of the Twelve-linked Chain of Interdependent Origination.¹

Towards the end of his life, Nāgārjuna lived under the patronage of a King Antīvāhana. In return for the royal patronage, Nāgārjuna provided the king with an elixir of long life. The king's son, Śaktiman, being impatient to reign, eventually realized that he would have to cut off the source of this wonder drug, and to accomplish this, would have to assassinate Nāgārjuna.

Now during this time, Nāgārjuna often spent his days in solitary meditation on Śrī Parvata. Deep in meditation, he did not hear his assassin's approach, but remained seated with bowed head as Śaktiman lifted the gleaming blade high. He did not so much as stir as the sword whistled down like a scythe. The surprise was Śaktiman's when the blade rebounded from the bared neck as if it had struck an iron column. Only then did Nāgārjuna look up and acknowledge his executioner: "You are surprised by your weapon's impotence, and afraid your purpose will be frustrated. But many lifetimes ago, I was walking along in the forest and accidentally brushed an insect with a blade of kuśa grass, slicing the insect in two and killing it. Now, owing to this deed, the present situation has arisen, and though my neck is impervious to steel, it can be easily hewn with a single stalk of kuśa grass. May my error serve as an example of the infallibility of karma!"

1. The twelve 'causes' for conditioned existence as set forth by the Buddha are:

1. ignorance (*ma-rig-pa*, *avidyā*)
2. motivation-configuration (*'du-byed*, *saṃskāra*)
3. perception (*rnam-par-shes-pa*, *vijñāna*)
4. name and form (*ming-gzugs*, *nāma-rūpa*)
5. six sensory fields (*skye-mched-drug*, *ṣaḍāyatāna*)
6. contact (*reg-pa*, *sparsā*)
7. feeling (*tshor-ba*, *vedanā*)
8. desire (*sred-pa*, *trṣṇā*)
9. grasping (*len-pa*, *upādāna*)
10. existence (*srid-pa*, *bhāva*)
11. birth (*skye-ba*, *jāti*)
12. old age and death (*rga-shi*, *jarāmaraṇa*)

Nāgārjuna explained that the first, eighth and ninth members represent emotionality (*nyon-mongs-pa*, *kleśa*); the second and tenth represent action (*las*, *karma*), and the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eleventh, and twelfth represent misery (*sdug-bsngal*, *duḥkha*). The Buddha stated that one who clearly and deeply comprehends this twelve-link chain (*pratīyasamutpāda*) penetrates the essence of the Dharma itself.

As Nāgārjuna was finishing his explanation, Śaktiman found a piece of kuśa grass, and plucking it up, he easily severed the Ācārya's head. Again Śaktiman was awe-struck, as from the bloody base of the neck he heard a distant voice:

I shall now depart for Sukhāvati Heaven
But afterwards I will enter this body again.

A female Yakṣa took possession of the severed head, and deposited it several miles away from the rest of the corpse. However, neither part of the body decayed, but instead, year after year, as if by magnetism, they drew nearer and nearer together. Finally, the head and body touched and fused, and Nāgārjuna came back to life, working for the sake of all sentient beings.

In total, Nāgārjuna worked six hundred years throughout the various regions and in various situations for the promotion of the Buddhadharma. In the course of his long life, he studied under at least five hundred learned teachers. Attending carefully to their teachings and compiling their instructions, he meditated on the teaching's practical application and expounded on its import. Few can compare with the splendor of the Great Doctor, and as the Father of the Mahāyāna, he is revered as the first of the Most Excellent Ones, the most illustrious of the Charioteers of India.

Asaṅga Together with Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga (Thogs-med) was one of the key figures in the elucidation of the Mahāyāna. He was born around 290 C.E. in Puruṣapura, the capital of Gandhāra. During his twelve-year residence at Nālandā, he converted numerous scholars—both non-Buddhist and Hīnayāna—to the teachings of the Mahāyāna; through his efforts, the Mahāyāna spread throughout India. Asaṅga was also a precursor of the philosophical line known as Cittamātra (Sems-tsam) or Vijñānavāda, and was influential in the Yogācāra, a related Mahāyāna system of practice.

Asaṅga studied the Hīnayāna teachings as a youth, but became dissatisfied with them when they failed to enable him to penetrate the meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras. In an effort to deepen his understanding he began to pray to Maitreya, and meditated in a cave for three years. Although he practiced the Ārya-maitreya-sādhana diligently, he achieved no noticeable success. Disheartened, he decided to abandon his spiritual pursuit. Leaving the cave, he saw that the rocks near the entrance had been worn away during his three-year retreat by birds brushing them daily with their wings. Similarly, he saw how dripping water had eroded



Asaṅga

even the largest of stones. This realization inspired him to continue his meditation for three more years. But his understanding was still not complete. Discouraged once again, he left the cave in search of food and came upon an old man who was producing needles by rubbing an iron rod with a piece of cotton. Inquiring how it was possible to produce needles in this manner, Asaṅga received the reply:

If a man possessed of moral strength
Wishes to accomplish something
He never meets with failure,
No matter how difficult the work may be.

Asaṅga took this advice to heart, and once again resumed his practice. Yet, even after twelve years of continuous meditation, he felt he had gained nothing. Now in total despair, he decided to abandon his quest

completely. As he was leaving his retreat, he came across a dog infested with maggots. Asaṅga became filled with compassion for the dog, but he realized that if he removed the maggots from the dog, they would starve. Yet, if he did not do so, the dog would die. So he decided to remove the maggots and place them on a piece of his own flesh. But the maggots were so delicate and vulnerable that the pressure of his fingers might harm them. Thus, he resolved to remove them with his tongue. Closing his eyes, he reached out for the dog, but at that moment she disappeared; he beheld Maitreya standing in her place, showering cascades of light in all directions.

O my father (said Asaṅga), my unique refuge,
I have exerted myself a hundred different ways,
But nevertheless I saw nothing.
Why have the rain-clouds and the might of the ocean
Come only now when, tormented by violent pain,
I am no longer thirsting?

Rebuked in this manner, Ārya-Maitreya replied:

Though the king of the Devas sends down rain,
A bad seed is unable to grow!
Though the Buddhas may appear in this world,
He who is unworthy cannot partake of the bliss.
From the beginning, I was here,
But your obscurations blinded you.
Now that compassion has arisen
You have become pure and empowered to perceive me.
To test my words, raise me on your shoulder
For others to see—carry me across the city.

So Asaṅga carried the Bodhisattva on his shoulders across the crowded bazaar of Acintya, but no one saw Maitreya. One old woman saw Asaṅga carrying a pup, and as a result, became fantastically wealthy. A poor porter saw Maitreya's toes, and attained samādhi and sadharaṇa-siddhi. Asaṅga himself attained Srotānugata-nāma-samādhi.

Then, holding Ārya-Maitreya's robe, Asaṅga went with him to Tuṣita Heaven, where he heard the Mahāyāna Doctrine expounded by the Ajītanātha. After he learned the real significance of all the Sūtras, he listened to the five Treatises of Maitreya: the Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra, Madhyānta-vibhaṅga, Dharmadharmatā-vibhaṅga, Uttara-tantra, and Abhisamayālamkāra. As each one of the five teachings was being expounded, Asaṅga attained samādhi.

Asaṅga is said to have resided for fifty years in Tuṣita Heaven, receiving teachings from Maitreya. Although he was over ninety years old when he returned from Tuṣita, Asaṅga possessed the same youthful vigor that was his before he left. When he returned to earth, he began to expound the Dharma but still had some difficulty completely elucidating the teachings. Therefore, at Asaṅga's request, Maitreya descended at night; showering Asaṅga with light, he recited the Daśabhūmika-sūtra and a commentary on it. Asaṅga memorized and explicated the text. Finally, Maitreya instructed him in the Sūrya-prabhā-samādhi, by which Asaṅga came to full understanding.

Working for the sake of sentient beings, Asaṅga established the Dharmāṅkura Vihāra in Veḷuvana Forest. Here Asaṅga instructed eight disciples, all of whom attained freedom from rebirth. Here also, he wrote down Maitreya's Five Treatises, as well as several original works of his own, such as the Abhidharma-samuccaya and the Mahāyāna-saṅgraha. In the Abhidharma-samuccaya, Asaṅga added a deep structural component to the picture drawn by his younger brother, Vasubandhu, in his Abhidharma-koṣa. He also brought to the foreground the concept of a substratum (ālaya) that preserves and resurrects every mental event surfacing in awareness.

Asaṅga's philosophical understanding of the many doctrines of the Buddha's teachings brought him countless students as well as the favor of many kings. He also succeeded in convincing his younger brother, Vasubandhu, of the profundity of the Mahāyāna approach to the Dharma. He is rightly called the foremost teacher of the Mahāyāna Doctrine, because during his life the number of Mahāyāna monks reached ten thousand. His strong moral conduct and great learning earned Asaṅga the respect of all Buddhist schools.

Āryadeva Nāgārjuna's foremost disciple and spiritual son was Āryadeva (Phags-pa'i-lha), who continued to advance his teachings. Through his writings, Āryadeva further expounded the Madhyamaka, especially in the Catuṣṭaka and Hastavāla-prakarāṇa. In other works, Āryadeva refuted the challenges of opponents, particularly the non-Buddhists, and outlined the basis of philosophical and tantric systems.

At the time when Guru Padmasambhava was residing in a cemetery in Simhāla (present-day Śrī Laṅkā), while in deep meditation, he perceived that the Buddhist Sangha of central India would be subject to a grave threat. The next morning, the king's gardener found in the royal



Āryadeva

garden a gigantic lotus blossom that stayed open day and night. He sent word to the king who came to inspect the sight. In the middle of the lotus blossom King Śrī Phala beheld a young boy. When the chief priest was consulted, he predicted: "This boy is destined to defeat the tīrthika Durdharṣakāla. You should take him into your palace and raise him as your son." The child received initiation from Padmasambhava, and was given the name Āryadeva. He begged Padmasambhava to grant him ordination, but was refused, since Nāgārjuna was destined to be his primary teacher.

He then entered into study, and mastered all the teachings of the First Turning. Later he went on pilgrimage to India and traveled to Śrī Parvata, where Nāgārjuna was then staying. For quite some time he remained there, penetrating the great master's understanding of non-substantiality.

At this time, Āryadeva also received the tantric teachings and achieved magical powers.

Now, during this time there was a Brahmin known as Durdharsakāla. Well-versed in mantra, non-Buddhist Tantra, and debate, he received direct teachings from Mahādeva, and was able to vanquish many Buddhists in debate, thus compelling them to become tīrthikas.

Humiliated by this unconquerable opponent, the monks at Nālandā sent an invitation to Āryadeva and made many offerings to Mahākāla, that this powerful adversary might be subdued. A black crow emerged from the stone image of Mahākāla and bore this invitation to the Ācārya. The latter then realized it was time for him to travel to Nālandā.

Along the way, Āryadeva met a tīrthika woman who requested that he give to her one of his eyes so that she could complete some magical rites. Āryadeva complied and resumed his journey, and, using the power of supernatural travel, he arrived at Nālandā. There, he erected prayer flags at the site of the forthcoming dispute and encircled the entire area with magical charms. Three times Āryadeva defeated Durdharsakāla in debate. As the latter attempted to escape embracing the Buddhist Doctrine by flying into the sky, Āryadeva subdued him by means of mantra. The tīrthika was imprisoned in a temple, and as he was reading in his room, he saw a prediction about himself in the Scriptures. Filled with great faith, he took refuge in the Triple Gem of Buddhism, changing his name to Mātṛceṭa. The monks rejoiced at this great victory.

Later, Tārā came to Mātṛceṭa in a dream and told him to compose many hymns to the Buddha in atonement for his past destructive actions. He did so, and became a very well known composer of beautiful stotras which were memorized by all.

During the reign of Candragupta, Āryadeva remained at Nālandā for quite a long time as chief professor, expounding the Dharma and working for the sake of all sentient beings through his study and meditation. In the course of his life he built twenty-four monasteries, using gifts bestowed by the local deities. Each of these monasteries became a significant center for the study of the Mahāyāna.

Āryadeva is said to have visited the realm of the Nāgas on seven occasions, and these visits inspired him to write a number of Mahāyāna texts. His scholarly contribution consists of six major works on logical disputation, epistemology, and the chief doctrines of the Mahāyāna, as

well as a few works on Tantra. Tradition says that he attained the eighth bhūmi of the Bodhisattva.

Vasubandhu Vasubandhu (dByig-gnyen) was born the son of a Brahmin somewhere near Kaniṣka's capital in Gandhāra. As a monk in a Sarvāstivādin monastery, he acquired an excellent knowledge of the literature and doctrines of this school. Under the direction of his teachers, Vasubandhu memorized the entire Tripiṭaka. He devoted himself to the study of the sacred texts and specialized in the Abhidharma, though he was versed in Sautrāntika lines of thought as well. Vasubandhu is looked upon as one of India's greatest dialecticians, scholastics, and contemplatives.

At an early age Vasubandhu began studying the Vibhāṣā with his teacher Buddhāmītra in Gandhāra. Then, in an attempt to resolve his questions concerning the Vaibhāṣika doctrines, he received extensive instruction in the Sautrāntika doctrines from Manoratha. Vasubandhu decided that in order to determine which of the two lines of thought was the superior he would travel to Kashmir to investigate the Vaibhāṣika teachings more fully. The Vaibhāṣika doctrines were so deeply rooted in the Kashmiri culture that the Kashmiris had strong feelings against the Sautrāntika doctrines. Vasubandhu thus feared that the Kashmiri scholars might bar him from studying there, so he entered the country secretly, pretending to be a lunatic so that the people would be sure not to mistake him for a scholar. Posing in various, sometimes humorous, guises, Vasubandhu soon found his way to the great Vaibhāṣika study center in Kashmir. He studied there with Saṅghabhadra and spent four years studying the Vibhāṣa under the master Skandhila, the author of the Abhidharmāvatāra, an orthodox Vaibhāṣika treatise preserved in both Tibetan and Chinese.

In the course of his studies, Vasubandhu often expressed his increasing frustration with the rigidity of the teachings. Finally, wishing to know who this brilliant yet vociferous student really was, Skandhila entered into a state of samādhi, and by its power he recognized Vasubandhu's true identity. This recognition worried Skandhila greatly, and he privately advised Vasubandhu to return to his native country at once, before he came to harm. Now, more convinced than ever that the Sautrāntika system displayed deeper philosophical insight than that of the Vaibhāṣika, Vasubandhu decided to return to his homeland. As he neared the border of Kashmir, the protective deities of the gate warned the people that a great scholar of Abhidharma, who possessed a full understanding of



Vasubandhu

the teachings of the Vaibhāṣika, was about to leave the country. But the people, remembering Vasubandhu in his guise as a lunatic, did not believe it. Nevertheless, Vasubandhu was barred exit three times, but on his fourth attempt he was allowed to pass freely through the gate and return to Puruṣapura.

After returning home, Vasubandhu gave a series of lectures on the Vaibhāṣika system to the general public. At the end of each lecture he would compose a verse or *kārikā* which summed up the day's lesson. These were engraved on copper plates which were hung around the neck of an elephant. Beating a drum, Vasubandhu would challenge anyone to refute the treatise. Within two years he had composed over six hundred verses, which gave an extensive outline of the entire Vaibhāṣika system. These verses constitute the *Abhidharma-koṣa*, which is widely accepted

by the different schools even up to the present time because of its all-encompassing scope. This great text reviews the totality of Buddhist psychology, discussing mind and mental events, and analyzing this difficult subject into clear systems of functional relationships.

Upon completion of the Koṣa, he sent it, along with fifty pounds of gold, to his old teachers in Kashmir. The professors of the Kashmiri school were elated that Vasubandhu had composed such a treatise on the Vaibhāṣika doctrine. Several Kashmiri Vaibhāṣikas then sent a hundred pounds of gold to Vasubandhu and asked him to write a commentary. Vasubandhu answered the Vaibhāṣikas' request by sending them his Abhidharmakoṣa-bhāṣya, which he had already completed. This work criticizes the Vaibhāṣika from the Sautrāntika viewpoint. It is one of the most outstanding works ever written on Abhidharma, but the orthodox Vaibhāṣikas did not accept it.

Around 350 C.E., Vasubandhu returned to Nālandā, where he heard of the fame of his brother, Aśaṅga, and listened to some of his treatises. Scornful of his brother's understanding, and with a mind closed to the Mahāyāna, Vasubandhu exclaimed:

Alas, Aśaṅga, residing in the forest,
Has practiced meditation for twelve years.
Without having attained anything by this meditation,
He has founded a system so difficult and burdensome
That it can be carried only by an elephant!

Aśaṅga soon learned of this attitude, and he resolved to convert Vasubandhu to the Mahāyāna. He sent two of his students with Mahāyāna texts to recite for Vasubandhu. The evening they arrived they recited, according to their instructions, the Akṣayamatīrdeśa-sūtra. At this time Vasubandhu thought that the Mahāyāna appeared to be logically well founded but that its practices were not conducive to upholding the vows, and could not lead to purification.

The next morning, the students recited the Daśabhūmika-sūtra as it had been expounded by Maitreya. On hearing these texts, Vasubandhu realized that the Mahāyāna was sound in both theory and practice, and he accepted the teachings of his brother. He was struck with great shame at having belittled the Great Doctrine, and started looking for a razor to cut off the tongue which had formed such contemptuous words towards the Mahāyāna. But Aśaṅga's two students stopped him, saying, "Why cut

off your tongue? Your own brother knows how to absolve you—go to the Ārya and pray to him.”

Vasubandhu did so, inquiring how he could make atonement. Asaṅga, in turn, asked Maitreya and relayed the message back to Vasubandhu: “Preach the doctrine of the Mahāyāna extensively; prepare many commentaries on the Sūtras; recite a hundred thousand times the Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī.” Hearing the Mahāyāna teachings only once from Asaṅga, Vasubandhu quickly learned all of them.

Vasubandhu also was a leading recipient of the Vinaya lineage of Rāhula. He was the first to elucidate two very important sections of the Buddhadharma known in Tibetan as lung and rtogs-pa. The lung (equivalent to the Sanskrit term Āgama) is the oral tradition of the Buddha’s teachings as preserved through an intellectual explanation (bshad-pa) of the texts. The realization of the meaning which brings about the experience of true understanding is known as rtogs-pa, which comes about through sādhana (sgrub-pa) practice. Vasubandhu stated that the whole of the Buddha’s teachings is divided up between these two, the lung-chos and the rtogs-pa’i-chos. If lung and rtogs-pa did not exist, then the Buddhadharma would not exist. rTogs-pa is considered to be an antidote to the kleśas or karmic chains, and has the beneficial result of allowing the mind to transmute all negativity into effective meditative techniques that lead to the experience of samādhi. Thus, rtogs-pa, or the realization of true meaning, is achieved through meditation (sgrub-pa). For the Hīnayāna, the chief focus of rtogs-pa is subduing the passions and negative emotions. For the Mahāyāna, the path consists of the transmutation of negative energy patterns into a healthy and balanced life.

After the passing of his brother, Vasubandhu became abbot (Upādhyāya) of Nālandā University. During his career there he taught some sixty thousand monks, and of these nearly a thousand monks accompanied him on later travels. He was responsible for a number of special occurrences, such as the suppression of epidemics and the extinguishing of fires. His efforts towards the advancement of the Mahāyāna in Nepal were also quite successful.

When Vasubandhu was about sixty years old, he conquered the Sāṃkhya philosophers who had previously defeated and humiliated his aged teacher Buddhamitra. For his victory over the Sāṃkhyas in debate and for his treatise Paramārtha-saptati, Emperor Candragupta II awarded him a substantial amount of gold, with which he built three monasteries for the study of both Mahāyāna and Sarvāstivāda.

Several years later, his former teacher, Saṅghabhadra, who had become a major figure in Vaibhāṣika thought, challenged Vasubandhu to a debate. But Saṅghabhadra was too aged to travel long distances, and the debate never took place. Before he died, Saṅghabhadra sent his works to Vasubandhu asking that Vasubandhu preserve them, which was done.

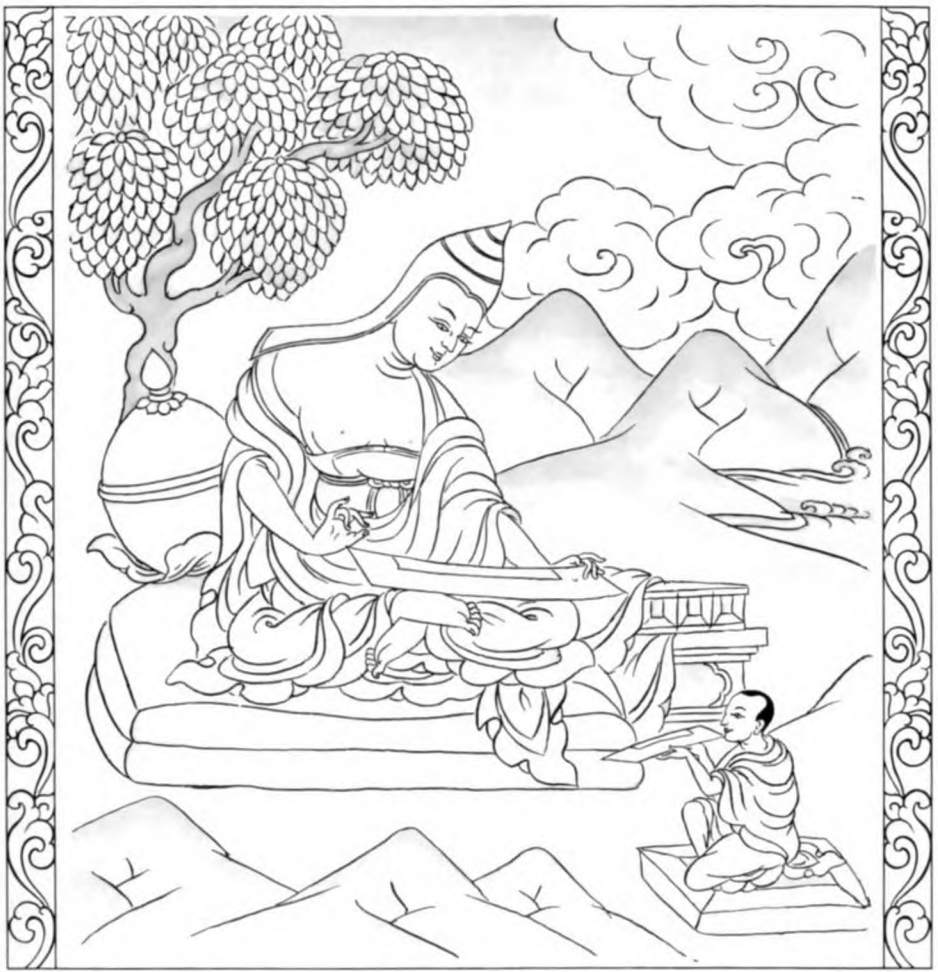
Vasubandhu's extensive writings were an outstanding contribution, clarifying Buddhist concepts and doctrines important to the Vijñānavādin and Yogācāra traditions. He is also known to have written texts on logic. More than thirty of his śāstras have been preserved in the Tibetan Canon.

Dignāga Dignāga (Phyogs-kyi-glang-po) was born into a Brahmin family that resided in southern India during the second half of the fourth century. He was ordained into monkhood by Nāgadatta of the Vātsīputrīya school, which is often designated the Pudgalavādin school because it affirmed the existence of an individual substance apart from its composite elements. He diligently studied the Śrāvaka Tripiṭakas and was instructed by Nāgadatta to "seek the indescribable self which is the essence of meditation." Though he faithfully practiced meditation and critical analysis, he could not find anything similar to the 'self' described by his preceptor. In desperation, he opened all the windows by day and lit many lamps at night, looking both externally and internally for an essential self, but he still could not find one. A friend of his noticed this somewhat eccentric behavior and reported it to Nāgadatta, who called upon Dignāga for an interview.

"Why is it that you indulge in such peculiar behavior? You are disturbing others with your conduct."

"O Upādhāya," replied Dignāga, "because my intellect is weak, and my insight insufficient, I am failing your instructions. Due to obscurations, I cannot see this 'indescribable self' you speak of, though I am seeking it in many ways." But Nāgadatta, feeling that Dignāga was trying to refute the Vātsīputrīya doctrine, became very angry and expelled Dignāga from the monastery.

Dignāga wandered about for some time and eventually came to Nālandā, where Vasubandhu was abbot. Under Vasubandhu's guidance, Dignāga learned the Tripiṭaka of all three Yānas. Having received the vidyā mantra, he attained the power to directly behold Ārya Mañjuśrī, who expounded the Dharma to him at great length. Dignāga became particularly proficient in the Vijñānavāda and in logic, which became the major fields for his contributions to Buddhist philosophy.



Dignāga

Retiring to a solitary place in Oḍviśa, he entered a cave in Bhoṭaśela Mountain, where he attained samādhi. Here he wrote commentaries to the Abhidharmakośa (Abhidharmakośa-vṛtti-marmapradīpa) and to the Guṇāparyanta-stotra. In order to systematize and unite all the themes of his earlier works, he resolved to compose a major compendium, the Pramāṇasamuccaya. As salutation to this work, he wrote with chalk on a wall of the cave:

Homage to him who is Logic personified,
 The Teacher, the Blessed One, the Protector,
 Who pursues the welfare of all sentient beings.
 To expound the various meanings of this Logic
 I shall herein combine
 The meanings of my previous works.

Just as he finished writing, the earth shook, thunder and lightning flashed, and the legs of all the heretical teachers in the vicinity became as stiff as wood. One of them, named Kṛṣṇamunirāja, understood the signs to be marks of Dignāga's great resolve. When Dignāga left the cave to beg for alms, the tīrthika entered and erased the salutation. Upon his return, Dignāga noticed the intrusion.

Dignāga rewrote the salutation from memory, but the next day, when he went out for alms, Kṛṣṇamunirāja again crept into the cave and rubbed out the inscription. Dignāga returned and again wrote out the salutation, but this time, he added a message to the intruder: "If you are erasing this as a joke, you should refrain, because my purpose is very lofty. And if you erase this verse due to envy, it will be of no use, since I have memorized it. However, if you are willing to defend yourself in debate against my theses, wait here and we will have a discussion." Again, the earth trembled, and the air was filled with ominous roaring and flashing. When Kṛṣṇamunirāja returned the next day, he read Dignāga's note, and awaited his return. When the Ācārya came back in, the opponents staked their beliefs as prize in the contest: whoever was defeated would have to embrace the doctrine of the victor. The arguments were given on both sides, and Kṛṣṇamunirāja was defeated. Then, a second and a third time, Dignāga's logic subdued the tīrthika. At this the Ācārya concluded: "I have vanquished your views and they crumble into dust. Now you must take refuge in the most Noble Doctrine." Enraged, Kṛṣṇamunirāja caused flames to issue from his mouth; scattering enchanted ashes around the cave, he burned up all of Dignāga's belongings and very nearly burned Dignāga himself. The tīrthika then escaped in the confusion.

Dignāga became very depressed. "I am supposed to be working for the sake of all sentient beings, but I cannot bring the Dharma to even one. It is no use to continue in this way; it would be better to give up the idea of becoming a Bodhisattva and simply realize liberation for my own benefit." So he threw the piece of chalk with which he was writing into the air, resolutely intending to enter Nirvāṇa when it touched the ground. But the chalk remained in the air. At that moment, Mañjuśrī appeared before him: "Do not give up your good intention! By associating with tīrthikas, incorrect ideas have arisen in your mind, but you should know that no heretic can harm your work. I will remain your spiritual friend until you obtain Buddhahood. Know that in the future this treatise will be the sovereign of the śāstras." Speaking thus, he vanished. With his obstacles removed, Dignāga proceeded to compose the Pramāṇa-samuccaya and was indeed very successful in his work.

Dignāga traveled to southern India to spread the doctrine; entering into debate with various tīrthika rivals, he was always victorious. In fact, during his career he defeated most of the non-Buddhists, becoming renowned as the foremost logician of the time. In character, he was always self-content and never ceased observing the twelve practices of an accomplished yogi. He spent much time meditating in solitary forests; despite his great fame, he had not a single servant.

Dignāga spent a number of years in Vajrāsana and established twenty-four centers of Vinaya and Abhidharma. Later, he journeyed to Kashmir, where he propagated the Mahāyāna doctrine extensively. He is said to have written over one hundred works in his lifetime.

Dharmakīrti Dharmakīrti (Chos-kyi-grags-pa) was born during the seventh century to a scholarly Brahmin tīrthika in the southern kingdom of Cūḍāmaṇi. It is said that he was a contemporary of the Tibetan king Srong-btsan-sgam-po. He was exposed to the complete learning of the non-Buddhists, mastering all their various arts, sciences, and philosophies. By the time he was eighteen, he was highly regarded as an up-and-coming young scholar. Dharmakīrti, however, came upon some Buddhist scriptures and realized the logical errors in the philosophies he had been studying until that time.

Adopting the ways of a Buddhist, Dharmakīrti was ousted by the community of non-Buddhist paṇḍitas. He traveled north, where he met Ācārya Īśvarasena who instructed him in many subjects. First Dharmakīrti analyzed and memorized all the Sūtras. Next he learned the five hundred dhāraṇīs. Finally, not being satisfied with this, he became desirous of penetrating the Pramāṇa-samuccaya of Dignāga. Īśvarasena then introduced Dharmakīrti to the great works of the logician.

The very first time Īśvarasena expounded the Pramāṇa-samuccaya, Dharmakīrti became his equal in understanding. Desiring clarification of certain points, Dharmakīrti requested his teacher to expound the text once again. This time Dharmakīrti understood it as Dignāga had intended, but he still had questions. Asking for a third explanation, Dharmakīrti realized the defects in Īśvarasena's understanding, and with his master's permission, enumerated these.

Īśvarasena was truly delighted, for here was one of his students who equaled his own master. And so he instructed Dharmakīrti to write a commentary to the Pramāṇa-samuccaya that would point out all the erroneous beliefs of Īśvarasena and others. This work, the Pramāṇavārttika,



Dharmakīrti

became Dharmakīrti's most important treatise. The object of this work was to meet all the criticisms and difficulties that had arisen in the field since Dignāga's pioneering work. The *Pramāṇavārttika* is thus a reformulation of Dignāga's thinking.

Around this time, there were many tīrthika scholars who excelled in the art of disputation, the foremost of these being Śaṅkarācārya.² Now the practice of the time was to make wagers on the outcome of debates; a frequent agreement would be that the vanquished would embrace the belief of the victor, and many outsiders had been converted by the great Dharma masters in this fashion. However, the Doctrine was now starting

2. This Śaṅkarācārya is not the same as the famous founder of Advaita Vedānta who lived in the late eighth century.

to decline, and the virtue of the monks no longer shone resplendently. Śaṅkarācārya had challenged the bhikṣus of various monasteries to debate, and had defeated them one by one. As a result, twenty-five Dharma centers had to be given up and almost five hundred of the monks had to accept tīrthika doctrines.

When Dharmakīrti learned of this, he resolved to utterly subdue all the opponents of the Dharma. He therefore completed his studies in the north and returned south. Disguised as a servant, he was hired by the household of Kumāralīla, who among the tīrthikas was without rival. Dharmakīrti worked very hard for his new master, performing the work of fifty or a hundred normal servants. This very much pleased Kumāralīla; in gratitude, he permitted Dharmakīrti to listen to his teachings.

Śrī Dharmakīrti stayed in that place only as long as it took to absorb all that he did not already know about the various non-Buddhist systems and philosophy. Departing for the city of Kakuguha, he posted a notice on the city gate challenging all to debate. This attracted the Brahmin Kanagupta and five hundred others. During three months of debate, Dharmakīrti defeated each tīrthika, one by one, and converted them all to the Dharma.

Kumāralīla became enraged when he learned of this and vowed to vanquish this upstart student. But Dharmakīrti remained invincible, causing even this great paṇḍita to take refuge in Lord Buddha. Then Dharmakīrti proceeded to decimate the ranks of the tīrthika Ācāryas, defeating the various teachers and converting them and all their students to belief in the Noble Doctrine. In the course of this, he established many Dharma centers, and caused the assembly of monks to increase greatly.

Meanwhile, Śaṅkarācārya, who had succeeded in defeating numerous followers of the Dharma, challenged the monks at Nālandā to debate. The latter wisely demurred until such time as Dharmakīrti could come up from the south and represent their views. Thus, a great confrontation took place before the king and a vast assembly of spectators. Śaṅkarācārya was so confident that he vowed to jump into the river Ganges if Dharmakīrti were victorious. Time and time again, Dharmakīrti reduced to absurdities the arguments of his opponent until finally the tīrthika had no reply left. Though Dharmakīrti tried to stop him, Śaṅkarācārya jumped into the Ganges, urging his chief disciples to carry on the debate.

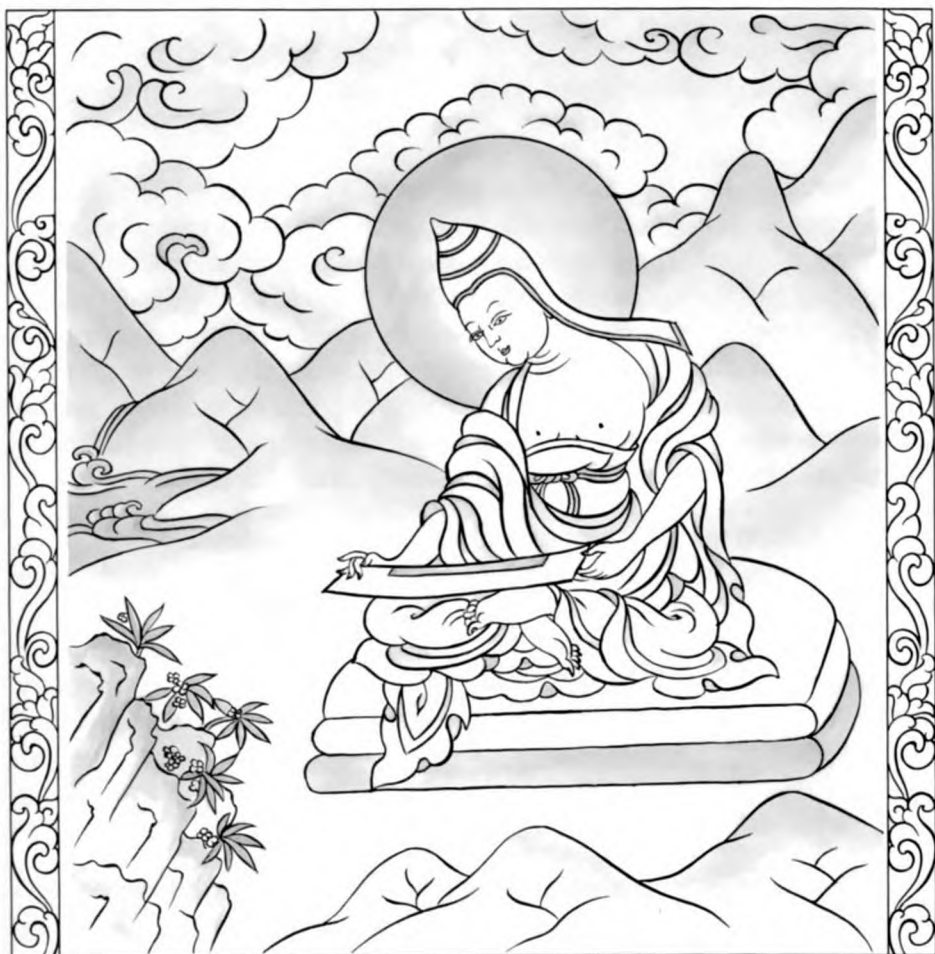
Although many of the opponents were converted at this time, others fled in despondency. The disciple Bhaṭṭācārya continued the disputation

after a recess of three years. During this interlude, Śaṅkarācārya was reborn as Bhaṭṭācārya's son. Upon resumption of the debate Bhaṭṭācārya could not refute Dharmakīrti's arguments, and, despite Dharmakīrti's efforts, he also jumped into the river and drowned. Again, many present were converted, while some, like the reborn Śaṅkarācārya, ran away. Later he returned to debate again, but losing every point, again he jumped into the Ganges. Finally, toward the end of Dharmakīrti's life, when Śaṅkarācārya was again reborn, he agreed to embrace Buddhism if he were defeated. His resulting conversion thus brought an end to the series of debates.

Besides actively defending and nurturing the Buddhadharma, Dharmakīrti traveled extensively and established some fifty centers for the Dharma. He also wrote a number of important works, most of which are subsumed under the heading of the 'Seven Treatises'. Of these seven, the two major works besides the *Pramāṇavārttika* are the *Nyāyabindu* and the *Pramāṇa-viniścaya*. These are primarily commentaries on the work of Dignāga, but Dharmakīrti carried the ideas further by refining and elucidating the topics of perception, inference, words, and argumentation. The four supplementary works, which deal primarily with logic and disputation are: *Hetubindu*, *Sambandha-parīkṣā*, *Vādanyāya*, and *Samtānāntara-siddhi*.

It is said that after he wrote these works, he gave copies to a number of paṇḍitas, but that only a few could understand. These few, through professional jealousy, proclaimed the inferiority of the 'Seven Treatises' and tied them to the tail of a dog. But Dharmakīrti said, "This is all right, for just as dogs run about all through the town and countryside, my writings will spread in all directions."

Dharmakīrti's thought is very difficult to absorb, and even his best students had difficulty in completely fathoming the subtlety of his teachings. Dharmakīrti asked Devendrabuddhi to write a commentary to the *Pramāṇavārttika* after he had painstakingly expounded it in all its detail. Devendrabuddhi presented the commentary for review, but Dharmakīrti washed it away with water. Devendrabuddhi rewrote it, but this time Dharmakīrti burned it. Finally, a third time, Devendrabuddhi employed the entire scope of his understanding, and Dharmakīrti accepted his work. But he said that the commentary explained only the literal meaning and not the deeper implications. Realizing that in the future, no one would be able to understand his logic, Dharmakīrti wrote at the end of the *Pramāṇavārttika*:



Guṇaprabha

Just as a river flows into the ocean,
So will the understanding of my logic vanish with my passing.

Guṇaprabha Guṇaprabha (Yon-tan-'od) was born in the seventh century. In his youth, he distinguished himself by his brilliance; and when he gained full maturity, he stood alone in his understanding of many facets of the Dharma.

Guṇaprabha was one of the four foremost disciples of Vasubandhu, being more learned than his master in the Vinaya and possessing complete knowledge of all eighteen schools and the immeasurable teachings of the Buddha. A master of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya and a later patriarch of the Mahāyāna, he was a teacher of King Harṣavardhana (c. 606–647). He lived at Mathurā in the Agradipura Monastery, where he

maintained the Vinaya rules of conduct among the five thousand monks residing there.

Originally, he was schooled in the study of the Mahāyāna, but before he had penetrated its profound meaning, he had the occasion to study the Vibhāṣā-śāstras. These texts impressed him to such an extent that he suspended his former study and devoted himself to the study of the Hīnayāna. During this time, he wrote a number of treatises reflecting his admiration for the Hīnayāna. His compositions include the Vinaya-sūtra ('Dul-ba'i-mdo) and its autocommentary (svavṛtti), a commentary on the chapter on ethics and manners in the Bodhisattva-bhūmi (Śīla-parivarta-bhāṣya), the Pañcaskandha-bhāṣya, and the Ekottara-karmaśataka.

In addition to being a monk and a scholar, Guṇaprabha was a doctor possessing great healing powers; he was often flooded with gifts from the laity, which he in turn distributed to the needy. One of Guṇaprabha's primary disciples was Dharmamitra of Tukharistan, who also became a Vinaya master in the Mūlasarvāstivādin tradition and wrote a commentary on the Vinaya-sūtra. Another disciple, Guṇamati, who attained proficiency in the Abhidharma, transmitted the Vinaya lineage through many generations of disciples until the time of Śrī Dharmapāla and Zhang-zhung rGyal-pa'i-shes-rab.

Śākyaprabha Śākyaprabha (Śākya-'od) was born in the eighth century in western India and lived during the reign of Gopāla, the father of King Dharmapāla, who built Vikramaśīla monastery. Śākyaprabha's teachers were Śāntiprabha and Puṇyakīrti, and his chief student was Śākyamitra. His compositions include the Mūlasarvāstivādi-śrāmaṇera-kārikā and its commentary, the Prabhāvatī. Along with Guṇaprabha, Śākyaprabha was an essential link in transmitting the Vinaya lineage.

Yogācāra: The Path of Introspection

The Yogācāra developed out of an analysis of perceptual situations based on a highly refined introspective and meditative methodology. This tradition held the view that any 'common sense' belief in an external world as existing apart from our own subjective world of experience must be rejected. For them, the entire life-world is an experience of mind—but they did not contend that everything is 'mental'. By developing the concept of a 'pervasive substratum' (kun-gzhi-rnam-par-shes-pa, ālaya-vijñāna) capable of retaining 'traces' and 'dispositions' from past expe-



Śākyaprabha

riences, they were able to better understand and explain the operation of the interactional fields within mind.

The Yogācāra analysis is rooted in teachings that the Buddha presented in several major Mahāyāna Sūtras. The treatises of Maitreya, as preserved by the great master Asaṅga, are another key source for these teachings. At the same time, there are parallels in earlier schools of thought. For instance, the substratum awareness (kun-gzhi-rnam-par-shes-pa) can be linked to concepts found in both the Sautrāntika and the Mahāsāṃghika.

Like the other major philosophical school of the Mahāyāna, the Mādhyamika, the Yogācāra rejected the Sautrāntika's thesis of svālakṣaṇa, which held that objects of perception had distinguishing characteristics that were real and made each object unique. However, they also set aside

the two levels of reality proposed by the Mādhyamika, the relatively real (kun-rdzob-bden-pa, saṁvṛti-satya) and the ultimately real (don-dam-bden-pa, paramārtha-satya). The Yogācārins recognized instead three natures as elucidated, for example, in the Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa of Vasubandhu: the notional-conceptual (kun-brtags, parikalpita), the relative (gzhan-dbang, paratantra), and the ideally absolute (yongs-grub, pariniṣpanna).

The terms Cittamātra (Sems-tsam) or Vijñānavāda are used in referring to different aspects of the philosophical bases that became associated with the Yogācāra tradition. While the term Yogācāra relates to the practice of meditative introspection, Cittamātra refers to the primacy of 'mind' in Yogācāra metaphysics. With the Vijñānavāda, emphasis is placed on the various strata of mind; the existence of objects external to the observer is disclaimed.

The Sūtras that primarily influenced the formation of the Yogācāra doctrine include the Laṅkāvatāra, the Saṁdhinirmocana, the Suvarṇaprabhāsa, and the Avataṁsaka. The Laṅkāvatāra consists of dialogue between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva Mahāmāti, at the time the Buddha was visiting Laṅkā (modern Śrī Laṅkā). This teaching contains concise discussions of basic concepts of the Mahāyāna, such as śūnyatā, the Tathāgata, the manifestations of the Buddha, and the Bodhisattva ideal. It also clarifies the link between Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha-nature) and the ālaya-vijñāna (substratum awareness).

The Saṁdhinirmocana-sūtra sets forth in detail the teaching on the three natures and predicts the advent of the Two Great Ones and the Six Ornaments. The Suvarṇaprabhāsa explains the manifestations of the Buddha and demonstrates that even when the Buddha passes into nirvāṇa, he does not cease to exist.

The full title of the Avataṁsaka-sūtra is the Mahāvaipulya-Buddhāvataṁsaka-sūtra ('The Great and Vast Buddha Garland Sūtra'). It consists of many parts, among them the Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra, which portrays the Bodhisattva Sudhana's search for enlightenment, and the Daśabhūmika-sūtra, which describes the path of the Bodhisattva and the interpenetrating nature of existence. In the Avataṁsaka, the teachings of the Tathāgatagarbha and the ālaya-vijñāna are brought together in a way that proved decisive for certain aspects of Cittamātra thought.

The Avataṁsaka was revealed by the Buddha upon his attainment of enlightenment and was transmitted through Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra,

and other great Bodhisattvas known as Vidyādhara (Rigs-'dzin) or Bearers of Pure Awareness. By the sustaining power of Dhāraṇī, it was safeguarded in Dākinī language and preserved in Tuṣita heaven. Eventually this Sūtra was received by Nāgārjuna at the Nāga palace, but it was not written down for many years.

Principal Works of the Yogācāra

In the fourth century C.E., Asaṅga systematized the teachings of these Sūtras into a path that later became known as Yogācāra. His brother Vasubandhu also elucidated the teachings of the Sūtras. Although an earlier Yogācāra tradition also existed, scholars traditionally trace the Yogācāra schools that developed centuries later to the contributions of these two great Mahāyāna masters.

The works known as the Five Treatises of Ārya Maitreya played an important role in the later Yogācāra tradition. The Five Treatises are:

1. Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra (mDo-sde-rgyan)
2. Abhisamayālaṅkāra (mNgon-rtogs-rgyan)
3. Madhyānta-vibhaṅga (dBus-mtha'-rnam-'byed)
4. Dharmadharmatā-vibhaṅga (Chos-dang-chos-nyid-rnam-'byed)
5. Uttaratantra (rGyud-bla-ma)

Asaṅga wrote down these works at Maitreya's direction; both Asaṅga and Vasubandhu further elaborated these teachings in a number of commentaries that became important to the Yogācāra tradition.

The Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra offers a detailed presentation of the Bodhisattva's path towards Enlightenment. The Abhisamayālaṅkāra organizes and elucidates topics set forth in the Pañcaviṃśatisahāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, revealing the significance of Prajñāpāramitā as a basis for practice and realization. It is consistent with Mādhyamika as well as Yogācāra, and does not refer to the three natures or to the ālaya-vijñāna.

The Madhyānta-vibhaṅga presents the Yogācāra view according to the teachings of the Middle Way, negating the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism. It also elucidates the three natures. The Dharmadharmatā-vibhaṅga investigates the three natures as they relate to the elements of the phenomenal world as well as in their intrinsic nature, indicating that when the relative reality of the elements is no longer tied to the notional-

conceptual, this is already absolute reality. The Uttaratantra deals with the theory of the Tathāgata-garbha and with the absolute as an undifferentiated principle.

The main body of literature of the Yogācāra school has been said to consist of twenty treatises: the five treatises of Maitreya; the five divisions of Asaṅga's Yogācāra-bhūmi-śāstra; Asaṅga's Abhidharma-samuccaya and Mahāyāna-saṅgraha; and eight treatises by Vasubandhu: the Trimśikā-kārikā-prakaraṇa, the Viṃśaka-kārikā-prakaraṇa, and commentaries on the Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra, the Madhyānta-vibhaṅga-kārikā, and the Daśabhūmika-sūtra. Together, these twenty treatises constitute the eight prakaraṇa divisions.

The Yogācāra-bhūmi expands and reworks the Abhidharma-samuccaya and eloquently details the stages of the Bodhisattva path. Among Asaṅga's other contributions of special importance for Yogācāra are an explanation of Maitreya's Uttaratantra and a commentary on the Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra. Other works by Vasubandhu as preserved in the Tibetan Canon include commentaries on the Daśabhūmika-sūtra, the Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, the Akṣayamati-nirdeśa, and the Buddhānusmṛti.

Sthiramati, one of Vasubandhu's foremost students, began his studies under Vasubandhu at the age of seven, and eventually became recognized as a scholar of both the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. He wrote brilliant commentaries on Vasubandhu's eight philosophical treatises, the most famous of which is the Trimśikā-vijñapti-bhāṣya. He also wrote commentaries on the Madhyānta-vibhaṅga-sūtra-bhāṣya, Vasubandhu's Sūtrālaṅkāra-vṛtti and Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya, and the Kāśyapa-parivarta from the Ratnakūṭa-sūtra. With Sthiramati, the mentalistic emphasis of the Yogācāra developed into a theory of perception and logic.

Vimuktasena, another of Vasubandhu's disciples, was the first to synthesize the teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras and the structure of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra. This synthesis was the precursor of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika viewpoint.

Another important text for the Yogācāra as it developed in China is the Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda-śāstra. This śāstra goes into some detail on the Tathāgatagarbha theory and contains a number of theses that are similar to Maitreya's Uttaratantra.

Founding Fathers of Buddhist Logic

Dignāga, who is considered the father of Buddhist logic, provided the basis for a second trend in Yogācāra thought by developing precise tools of logic and epistemology. He established the two means of obtaining valid knowledge and reduced the five-part syllogism of medieval Indian logic to three parts. He applied Yogācāra insights to the logic and epistemology of the Sautrāntikas.

Dignāga's contribution to logic is in five major texts: the *Ālambana-parīkṣā*, *Trikāla-parīkṣā*, the *Hetu-cakra-ḍamaru*, the *Nyāyamukha*, and his definitive work, the *Pramāṇa-samuccaya* with its autocommentary (*vṛtti*). The *Ālambana-parīkṣā* is concerned with the true nature of the *ālambana*—the epistemological object of the perceptual world. Here the *Vaiśiṣṭika* position is thoroughly analyzed and proved untenable. Dignāga established that the *ālambana*, as it appears in a relative sense, is only a construct, and that mind alone is real. He thus reaffirmed the position of *Asaṅga* and *Vasubandhu*.

In the *Pramāṇa-samuccaya* Dignāga reorganized his earlier works and wrote a commentary to them. He wrote this work after his retirement from *Nālandā* University, while residing at the monastery of *Acalā*, the site of the *Ajaṅṭā* caves.

The two principal commentators to Dignāga's works were *Dharmapāla* and *Dharmakīrti*. *Dharmapāla* (c. 671–695) is the author of a number of commentaries preserved only in the Chinese, including the *Vijñaptimatratā-siddhi-śāstra*.

Dharmakīrti (c. 600–660), the most famous successor to Dignāga, is said to have surpassed his teacher, *Īśvarasena*, in comprehending Dignāga's system. He composed an enlarged reworking of Dignāga's *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*, titled the *Pramāṇa-vārttika*. Along with this treatise, he authored eight other works on logic, including the *Nyāyabindu* and the *Pramāṇa-viniścaya*.

Dharmakīrti's outstanding works on logic stimulated a flood of commentarial literature. Among the logicians who elaborated further on his *Pramāṇa-vārttika* were *Devendrabuddhi*, his disciple *Śākyabuddhi*, and *mKhas-grub-rje*, a disciple of *Tsong-kha-pa*. The master *Vinitadeva* composed commentaries on the *Pramāṇa-viniścaya* and *Nyāyabindu*.

Like Dignāga, *Dharmakīrti*'s principal successor did not arise until a generation after his death. This was *Dharmottara* (750–810), the logician

who transmitted the lineage of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti through the school of logic he founded in Kashmir. Dharmottara wrote detailed commentaries on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-viniścaya* and the *Nyāyabindu*. His work is highly esteemed in Tibet, where eight of his works on logic and epistemological inquiry are preserved in Tibetan translation, including two texts titled *Pramāṇa-parīkṣa*, the *Anya-apoha-prakaraṇa*, the *Paraloka-siddhi*, and the *Kṣaṇabhaṅga-siddhi*.

After Dharmottara, the aspect of the *Yogācāra* based on Dignāga and Dharmakīrti became absorbed into the *Mādhyamika-Svāntarika*. In this form it has wielded a very strong influence on the later development of Buddhist philosophy.

Prajñāpāramitā: The Heart of the Mahāyanā

The *Prajñāpāramitā* approaches the understanding of *sūnyatā* and the nature of the *Bodhisattva* through the practice of the *pāramitās*, or six kinds of higher transforming functions. Its vast body of literature sets forth many of the most refined elements of the *Mahāyāna* (*Pāramitā-yāna*) path, particularly the nature of *sūnyatā* and *bodhicitta*. Here, enlightenment is equated with realization of *sūnyatā*, which transcends one's limited perceptions and brings one to a level of open-ended possibilities. This awakening is a gradual process of freeing the mind from its obscurations, which prevent direct insight. Poetic and intellectually probing, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature proclaims the entire teachings of the Buddha, from the initial embarking on the path to the final realization of the nature of existence.

The *Prajñāpāramitā* was first explained by the Buddha during the Second Turning of the Wheel, which occurred at Vulture Peak (near *Rājagṛha*), sixteen years after his enlightenment. According to *Nāgārjuna*, the Buddha placed the written *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* in the custody of the *Nāgas* until such a time as human beings should be ready to receive them; *Nāgārjuna* later collected these *Sūtras* from the Palace of the *Nāgas* for King *Amarāvati*. The *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition also has an oral transmission.

Pāramitā (*pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa*) means 'to go to the other shore' and refers to the means of transcending limitations. The term is not to be found in the texts of the First Turning; an early written usage occurs in the *Mahāvastu*, a famous account of the life of the Buddha.



Vulture Peak A modern Stūpa rests atop the hill where Lord Buddha expounded the Prajñāpāramitā.

Development of the Prajñāpāramitā in India mainly occurred between the years 100 and 900 C.E.; by the fourth century, Prajñāpāramitā was personified as a female deity of the Buddhist pantheon. As a spiritual course, it is referred to as the Pāramitāyāna; as distinguished from the Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna, it can be called the Bodhisattvayāna. At its heart is the practice of compassion and the six pāramitās: generosity (sbyin-pa, dāna), moral practice (tshul-khrims, śīla), patience (bzod-pa, kṣānti), effort (brtson-'grus, vīrya), meditation (bsam-gtan, dhyāna), and wisdom (shes-rab, prajñā).

The teachings of the Mahāyāna explain that through such means it is possible to reach the state of being a fully enlightened Buddha, a goal not sought in the early schools of Buddhism, which focus on attaining the perfect liberation from suffering that characterizes the Arhat. In

elucidating that goal, the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras emphasize the non-dual nature of reality and negate all aspects of both existence and non-existence. It was this Mahāyāna doctrine of śūnyatā which the followers of the Hīnayāna found frightening and could not accept, and which became the very foundation for the philosophy of the Mādhyamika.

Texts of the Prajñāpāramitā

Originally, all the longer Prajñāpāramitā texts were referred to collectively as Prajñāpāramitā, but in time distinctions among them were made as to their length. According to Tāranātha, the Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā, the Prajñāpāramitā teaching in 8,000 lines, had been placed in the dwelling of Candragupta, King of Orissa, by the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who disguised himself as a monk. There are many editors and commentaries on this often-studied Sūtra. The longer Sūtras were expansions of the same basic themes. Shorter works, including the famous Diamond and Heart Sūtras, appeared later; they distilled and extracted the essence of the teachings.

Much of the Twenty-Five Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā, has been lost in the original. However, an excellent Tibetan translation of it (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-stong-phrag-nyi-shu-lnga-pa) was made during the early period of Dharma transmission to Tibet (8th–9th centuries). It has a number of commentaries which were translated by Kumārajīva in China and Śāntibhadra and Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba in Tibet.

The Sanskrit original of the Eighteen Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra has not survived in its entirety, but there exists a translation of its eighty-seven chapters (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-khri-brgyad-stong-pa) by Ye-shes-sde and others. The Ten Thousand Line Sūtra, the Daśasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, appears to be completely lost. A Tibetan translation (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-khri-ba-stong-pa) was made by Jinamitra, Prajñāvarman, and Ye-shes-sde.

The One Hundred Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-stong-phrag-brgya-pa) has at least seven commentaries which were translated into Tibetan by Surendrabodhi, Ye-shes-sde, and others.

The Seven Hundred Line Sūtra, the Saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-bdun-brgya-pa) was translated

by Surendrabodhi and Ye-shes-sde. Commentaries on this work were written by Vimalamitra and Kamalaśīla. The Five Hundred Line Sūtra, the Pañcaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-lnga-brgya-pa) is lost in the original, but a translation of it was made by Śilendrabodhi, Jinamitra, and Ye-shes-sde.

The Three Hundred Line Sūtra, the Vajracchedikā or Diamond Sūtra (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-rdo-rje-gcod-pa) was translated by Śilendrabodhi and Ye-shes-sde. Excellent translations of its commentaries by Asaṅga (Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-rdo-rje-gcod-pa-bshad-sbyor-gyi-tshig-le'ur-byas-pa, Prajñāpāramitāya-kārikā-saptati) and subcommentaries by Vasubandhu were made by Kamalaśīla and Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan.

The Fifty Line Prajñāpāramitā-ardhaśatikā ('Phags-pa-bcom-ldan-'das ma-shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa-lnga-bcu-pa) is lost in the Sanskrit original but is available in Tibetan translation.

One of the most treasured Sūtras of the entire Mahāyāna, the Heart Sūtra, or Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra (bCom-ldan-'das ma-shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa'i-snying-po) found its way to China through the great translator, Kumārajīva (c. 400), who made available the first Chinese edition of this work. Commentaries on the Heart Sūtra available in Tibetan have been written by Vimalamitra, Jñānamitra, Vajrapāṇi, Mahājāna, and Atīśa. The Sūtra consists of a dialogue between Avalokiteśvara and Śāriputra, in which the Bodhisattva explains the heart of the Doctrine. The entire meaning of Prajñāpāramitā is expressed in the Heart Sūtra's mantra, GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE BODHI SVĀHĀ!

The Abhisamayālamkāra (mNgon-rtogs-rgyan) of Maitreya, as written down by Asaṅga, is one of the most important commentaries on the Prajñāpāramitā. Its full title is the Abhisamayālamkāra-nāma-prajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra, known in Tibetan as the Shes-rab-kyi-pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa'i man-ngag-gi-bstan-bcos-mngon-par-rtogs-pa'i rgyan-ces-bya-ba'i-tshig-le'ur-byas-pa. It was translated into Tibetan by Go-mi-'chimed and Blo-ldan-shes-rab (1059-1109).

The Abhisamayālamkāra organizes the topics of the large Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras into a structured path toward Buddhahood. The text contains eight main sections and seventy subsections. Each of the eight sections deals with a specific aspect of the Buddhist path, and taken together they form a practical guide to liberation.

The first three sections explicate the three forms of intuitive understanding. The first section outlines the three foundations of knowledge: hearing the teachings, contemplating what has been heard, and making this a lived experience. The second section encourages one to acquire the knowledge gained on the four paths (the paths of accumulation, of application, of insight, and of meditation) and to realize that there is no abiding essence in external objects. The third section points to the non-existence of an eternal essence abiding in the self. Through the openness generated by these understandings, the Bodhisattva becomes free to work for the enlightenment of all beings.

The fourth section deals with the realization of the three topics previously described, while the fifth is the accumulation and refinement of this process. The sixth is the instantaneous realization of the three topics. The seventh section describes the result of practicing the four methods just mentioned. And the eighth and final section concerns the results of reaching the goal: complete, perfect Enlightenment.³

The Prajñāpāramitā literature has played a significant role in the development of Buddhist thought in Tibet. The Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras alone comprise over twenty volumes of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon (bKa'-gyur), and seven volumes in the Nyingma Edition of the Canon.

Madhyamaka: The Open Dimension

The blossoming of the Mahāyāna began early in the second century B.C.E. shortly after the Buddhist Council at Puruṣapura. During this time,

3. There are over thirty commentaries on the Abhisamayālaṅkāra. The Indian commentators include Vimuktasena, Ratnākaraśānti, Haribhadra, Prajñākaramati, Dharmamitra, Dharmakīrtiśrī, Kumāraśrībhadrā, Buddhaśrījñāna, and Ratnakīrti. Vimalamitra and Kamalaśīla also translated several works into Tibetan and wrote commentaries. The Tibetan commentators and translators include sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan, Nam-mkha'i-snying-po, Ye-shes-sde, Shakya-'od, Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, Dar-ma-rin-chen, Rin-chen-bzang-po, bKra-shis-rgyal-mtshan, Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba, Byams-pa'i-dpal, Chings Yong-tan-'bar, Tsong-kha-pa, Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan, Rong-ston Sha-kyā'i-rgyal-mtshan dGe-'dun-grub-pa, Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho, mKhas-grub bsTan-pa-dar-ba, dByangs-can dGa'-ba'i-blo-gros, and Jam-dpal-rgya-mtsho.

In later times, lucid and precise commentaries were composed on particularly difficult aspects of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra by the rNying-ma lamas Mi-pham, dPal-sprul Rinpoche, and sPo-ba sPrul-sku (mDo-sngags-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma), as well as many lamas of the gSar-ma-pa tradition.

Buddhism was flourishing. There appeared innumerable masters from all parts of India who displayed an unusual faculty for teaching the doctrines of the Mahāyāna; many of these had the ability to directly receive the Dharma from the principal Bodhisattvas who serve as both protectors and transmitters of the Dharma from the realm of transcendent meaning. Maitreya (Byams-pa), who disseminated śāstra texts or commentaries to such human masters as Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu, is often considered the 'originator' of the Mahāyāna school. Other Bodhisattvas who transmitted or protected the Mahāyāna texts include Mañjuśrī (Jam-dpal), Avalokiteśvara (sPyan-ras-gzigs), Vajrapāṇi (Phyag-na rdo-rje), Samantabhadra (Kun-tu-bzang-po [not to be confused with the Ādi-buddha]), Guhyapati (gSang-ba'i-bdag-po), Kṣitigarbha (Sa'i-snying-po), Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin (sGrib-pa-rnam-sel), and Akāśagarbha (Nam-mkha'i-snying-po).

In addition to the presence of these uniquely endowed teachers, there also appeared five hundred learned masters, including the Mahābhāṭṭāraka Avitarka, Vigatarāgadhvaja, Divyākara Gupta, Rāhulamitra, Jñānātala, and the Mahā-upāsaka Saṅgatala.

The Brahman Kulika invited many of the Ācāryas to the West, and King Lakṣāśva, who worked extensively to support the Dharma, ordered the erection of five hundred temples to be built on the summit of Mount Abu for these masters. The King selected five hundred of his most intelligent and devout followers to be ordained and had them engage in the study of the Mahāyāna. A great number of these Mahāyāna followers became brilliantly versed in the Sūtras, attained the faculty of prescience (mngon-par-shes-pa, abhijñāna) and the capacity of displaying miraculous accomplishments (rdzu-phrul, ṛddhi) to their disciples. Subsequently, King Lakṣāśva secured many Mahāyāna Sūtras which he placed at the site of the future Nālandā university, so that eventually, Nālandā became celebrated for its innumerable Mahāyāna texts.

From the heavenly spheres, the realm of the gandharvas and the rakṣasas—but particularly from the world of the Nāgas—a multitude of Mahāyāna Sūtras began appearing.⁴ Sadaprarudita found one of the

4. These Sūtras included the Ratnakūṭa (Ārya-ratnakūṭa-dharma-paryāya-śata-sāhasrikā, 'Phags-pa-dkon-mchog-brtsegs-pa-chos-kyi-rnam-grangs-'bum), the Avatāṃsaka (Ārya-avatāṃsaka-dharmaparyāya-śata-sāhasrikā, 'Phags-pa-phal-bo-che-chos-kyi-rnam-grangs-'bum), the Laṅkāvatāra (Ārya-laṅkāvatāra-pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā, 'Phags-pa-lang-kar-gshegs-pa-nyi-khri-linga-stong-pa), the Gaṇḍavyūha (Gaṇḍavyūha-dvādaśa-

Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras in the center of a tower in the town of Gandhavati in Gandhāra. The text, which had been placed there by the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata, was written with melted beryl on sheets of gold, and sealed with seven seals. It was enclosed in a box resting on a 'litter' enhanced with seven jewels.

At the time King Candrapāla ascended the throne, the Ācārya Rāhulabhadra (Saraha) was ordained at Nālandā by the Bhaṭṭāraka Kṛṣṇa. After mastering the teachings of the Hīnayāna, Rāhulabhadra received instructions in the doctrines of Mahāyāna from Ācārya Avitarka. His principal teachers, however, were the tutelary deities such as the Bodhisattva Guhyapati, who extensively instructed him in the Sūtras and Tantras. Rāhulabhadra, along with Kamalagarbha, Ghanasa, and others, then began to teach Madhyamaka. The formulation and systematization of Mādhyamika philosophy was the work of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, and its development in India through the Mādhyamika school witnessed brilliance in every phase of its development, spanning from the second to the eleventh century.

Nāgārjuna, the student of Rāhulabhadra, brought to maturity the Madhyamaka philosophy with the guidance of his great teacher. Both Bodhisattvas brought into focus the elements of Madhyamaka dominant in the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras, and under Nāgārjuna's leadership, Nālandā flourished and soon surpassed the beauty of Bodh Gayā, the principal seat of the followers of the Śrāvakayāna.

According to tradition, in addition to the voluminous Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras, Nāgārjuna had access to nearly a hundred other Mahāyāna texts. Both Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva were influenced by the Aṣṭasāhasrikā, Saddharma-puṇḍarīka, Lalitavistara, Laṅkāvatāra, Tathāgataguhyaka, Samādhirāja, Suvarṇa-prabhāsa, and Daśabhūmika Sūtras.

Nāgārjuna's teachings based on these sources became known as Madhyamaka or doctrine of the Middle Way (Madhyama-pratipad), as initially presented by the Buddha. These doctrines teach that the highest truth is realized by the avoidance of the extremes of either luxury or asceticism, eternalism or nihilism. The Middle Way developed the doctrine of śūnyatā, or openness, systematizing the teachings presented in the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras.

sāhasrikā, rGyan-stug-po-stong-phrag-bcu-gnyis-pa), and the Dharma-saṅcaya-gāthā-dvādaśa-sāhasrikā, (Chos-yang-dag-par-sdud-pa-stong-phrag-bcu-gnyis).

As an expression of this doctrine in daily conduct, Nāgārjuna instituted a strict Vinaya code in Nālandā. But many Śrāvakas and Sthaviras claimed that his teachings differed from the teachings of the Buddha, for Nāgārjuna followed the Mahāyāna Sūtras, which the orthodox Śrāvakas did not accept.

Both the philosophy of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras and the doctrine of śūnyatā as expounded by Nāgārjuna present the premise that 'existence' (bhāva) is devoid of a reality of its own. Throughout his philosophical treatises, Nāgārjuna elaborates upon the similes used in the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras to illustrate śūnyatā, which liken existence to a dream, a magical apparition, an illusion, a mirage, the reflection of the moon in water, an echo, a cloud land, and a phantom. Although the Yogācāra criticized aspects of the Mādhyamika conception of śūnyatā that grew out of this analysis, it was strongly influenced by the doctrine itself.

Masters of the Mādhyamika School

Nāgārjuna composed a number of expositions which are of major import to Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy. His principal texts include the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā (Prajñā-mūla), the Śūnyatā-saptati, the Yukti-śāṣṭhikā, the Vighraha-vyāvartanī-kārikā, the Vyavahāra-siddhi, and the Dvādaśadvāra-śāstra. Of the six main treatises of Nāgārjuna, the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā became the primary text of the Mādhyamika school. So important was this root text from the fourth century onward, that numerous followers of this tradition have written commentaries on it, including Buddhapālita (c. 400–450) and Candrakīrti (600–650).

Nāgārjuna's Vighraha-vyāvartanī is a refutation of possible objections that could be raised against the śūnyatā dialectic. Nāgārjuna directs his argument against the Abhidharmikas and demonstrates śūnyatā as the central theme of the Mahāyāna Sūtras. Both the Vighraha-vyāvartanī and the Vaidalya-prakaraṇa are works using the 'logic of the four alternatives' (tetralemma = catuṣkoṭi). Their central subject is a critical study of the Nyāya school of Indian philosophy. The Śūnyatā-saptati is, on the whole, a summary of the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā, while the Dvādaśadvāra-śāstra is essentially a compendium of the Śūnyatā-saptati and the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā. The Yuktiśāṣṭhikā differs from Nāgārjuna's other principal works in its emphasis on the primacy of mind.

Āryadeva, Nāgārjuna's foremost disciple, continued Nāgārjuna's criticism of the Abhidharma tradition. He also strongly argued against the

non-Buddhist schools of the Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika, as evidenced in his chief work, the *Catuḥśataka*. Āryadeva's other main works include the *Hasta-vala-prakaraṇa* and the *Jñānasāra-samuccaya*. Another major text, the *Akṣara-śataka* ('The Hundred Letters'), is variously ascribed to either Nāgārjuna or Āryadeva.

Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamaka-śāstra* and *Dvādaśa-śāstra* and Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka* are the three treatises which Kumārajīva (344–413 C.E.) took to China and on which the Chinese Mādhyamika school, the San-Lun, is based. Kumārajīva translated these texts into Chinese between the years 401 and 409. Although Kumārajīva's native city of Kuchā was a primary center for the Sarvāstivādin school rather than the Mahāyāna, he is principally responsible for the transmission of the Mādhyamika from India to China. Kumārajīva was also important in the propagation of the Mahāyāna in Kuchā. By the seventh century, more than a hundred titles were attributed to Kumārajīva as translator. He showed a particularly excellent faculty of mind for translating and advancing the *Prajñāpāramitā* and Śūnyavādin doctrines in China. His biography of Nāgārjuna is a primary source for the life of this great Mahāyāna master.

Around the fifth century a split occurred within the Mādhyamika which gave rise to two separate lines of thought. *Buddhapālita* (470–540) became the main proponent for the *Prāsaṅgika* (Thal-'gyur-pa) school, which holds that the true method of Nāgārjuna's and Āryadeva's philosophy is to reduce to absurdity the arguments of the opponent without ever taking a position oneself. The *Prāsaṅgika*, whose doctrines are derived from Nāgārjuna's *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, holds five works by Nāgārjuna as its doctrinal authority: the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, the *Yuktiśāṭhikā*, the *Śūnyatā-saptati*, the *Vigraha-vyāvartanī*, and the *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*.

Bhāvaviveka, a contemporary of *Buddhapālita* and the founder of the *Svātantrika* (Rang-rgyud-pa) school of Mādhyamika, argued strongly against the *Prāsaṅgika*'s use of refutation without counter-argument as being simply a dependence on the position or arguments of others. *Bhāvaviveka* adopted methods of logic from *Dignāga* and utilized these in setting forth proofs of the Mādhyamika doctrine. He composed the *Madhyamaka-ratna-pradīpa*, in which he attempted to establish the basic Mādhyamika standpoint by syllogistic arguments. Additional works by *Bhāvaviveka* include the *Madhyamakārtha-saṅgraha*, the *Prajñā-pradīpa* (a commentary upon the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*), the *Madhyamaka-avatāra-pradīpa*, and the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya* and its com-

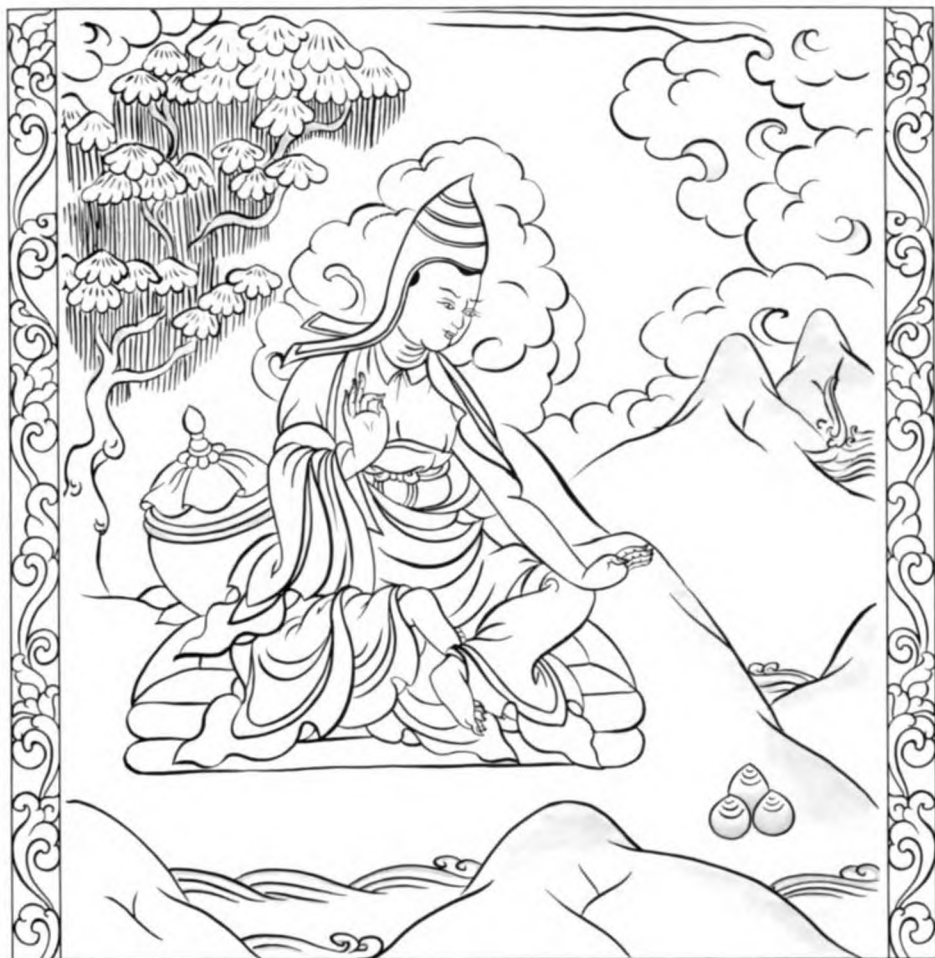


Bhāvaviveka

mentary Tarkajvālā. Due to his assertion that external objects conventionally exist by means of their own natures, Bhāvaviveka was later looked upon as the primary exponent of what became known as the Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika school.

Although Buddhapālita represented the Prāsaṅgika and Bhāvaviveka the Svātantrika, their works are very similar in content and impact. They were writing about the same experience and goal, simply from different points of view. From the viewpoint of a higher reality, within the meditative experience itself, both schools are in perfect agreement.

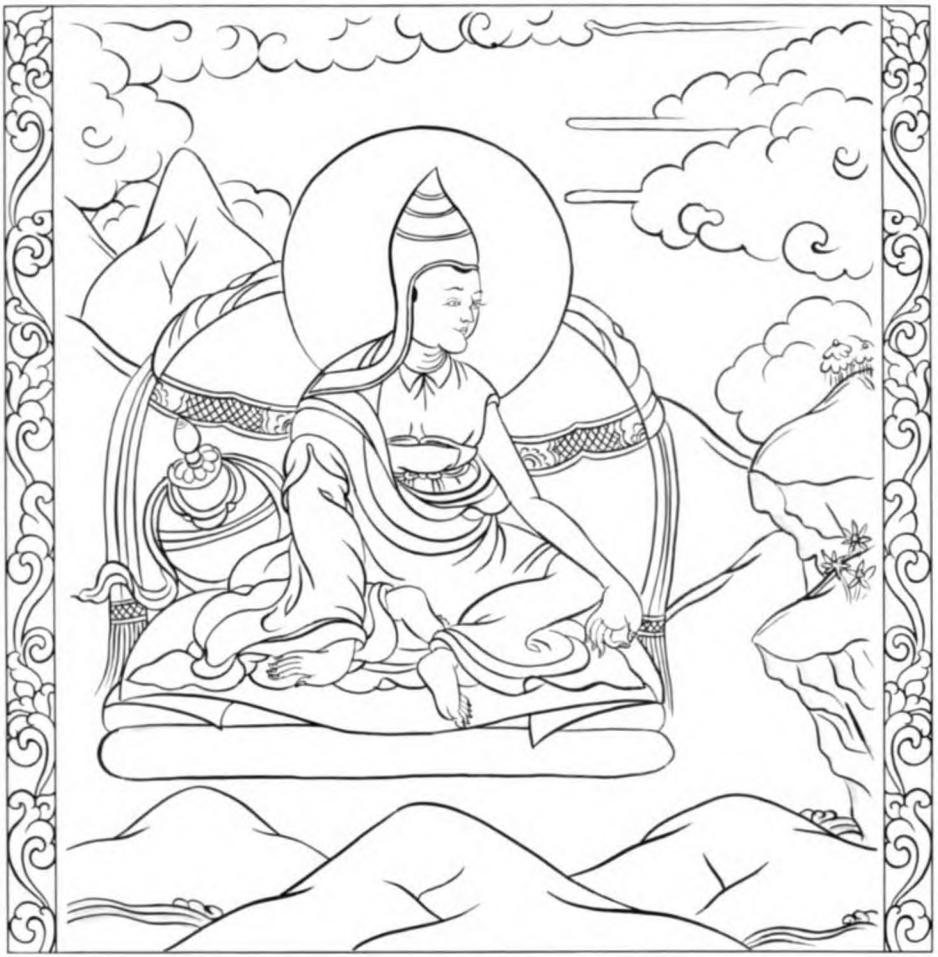
During the early seventh century Candrakīrti arose as the chief exponent of the Prāsaṅgika school. Reaffirming the standpoint of Buddhapālita, Candrakīrti refuted not only the Svātantrika position but that of the Vijñānavāda and the Sautrāntika as well. His principal work is the



Candrakīrti

Prasannapadā, a commentary on the Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā; his other works include the Madhyamakāvātāra and commentaries on Nāgārjuna's Śūnyatā-saptati and Yukti-śāṣṭhikā. He also wrote two smaller manuals, the Madhyamaka-prajñāvatāra and the Pañcaskandha-prakaraṇa.

Śāntideva (c. 685–763) also followed the Prāsaṅgika method of Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti, and his Śikṣāsamuccaya and Bodhicaryāvatāra are two of the most popular works in the entire Mahāyāna literature. The Śikṣāsamuccaya, a compendium of the major Mahāyāna doctrines, relies heavily on quotations from the Sūtras, many of which are now lost in the original. Both this work and the Bodhicaryāvatāra are practice-oriented texts which encourage the cultivation of the Bodhisattva path.



Śāntideva

When Śāntideva was studying at Nālandā, the other monks required him to teach before the great assembly, thinking that they would thus embarrass him due to his apparent lack of understanding of the Dharma. But his great knowledge was made manifest as he began to recite the Bodhicaryāvatāra, which he had himself composed. When he came to the ninth chapter on the Perfection of Wisdom, he rose into the sky until he became invisible. After completing the recitation from beyond the clouds, he once again appeared. The works of Śāntideva were thereafter of great importance in the development of Mahāyāna in India, and they have been extensively studied by all schools in Tibet.

In the eighth century there developed a strong mentalistic phenomenistic trend in Mādhyamika, with Śāntarakṣita and his pupil Kamalaśīla among its chief proponents. Both scholars extensively studied the works



Kamalaśīla

of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti and wrote brilliant expositions on their philosophical trends. Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṅgraha* and Kamalaśīla's commentary (*pañjikā*) soon became basic resources for the study of philosophy and logic.

Both Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla continued with the Mādhyamika-Svātantrika line of Bhāvaviveka, but added to it their comprehensive understanding of the *Pramāṇavārttika* and other of Dharmakīrti's works. Thus, although they fundamentally held the Mādhyamika-Svātantrika line of thought, aspects of *Yogācāra* became increasingly apparent in their works. In both India and Tibet, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla provided an important synthesis between the *Yogācāra* and the *Svātantrika*. These two masters are considered among the principal proponents of

the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika (rNal-'byor-spyod-pa'i-dbu-ma-rang-rgyud-pa) in Tibet.

Kamalaśīla, born about 710, was the author of a number of works on logic (nyāya), and, like his teacher, Śāntarakṣita, also wrote treatises on Tantra. Most of these compositions were completed during his professorship at Nālandā. Although only his monumental commentary (Tattvasaṃgraha-pañjikā) seems to have been preserved in the original Sanskrit, all of Kamalaśīla's known works are extant in Tibetan translations. In addition to his commentary (pañjikā) to the Tattvasaṃgraha, these include the Madhyamakālamkāra-pañjikā, Nyāyabindu-purvapakṣa-saṃkṣipta, Ārya-saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-ṭikā, the Ārya-vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-ṭikā, the Madhyamakāloka, the three Bhāvanākrama, and the Mahāmudrā-tattvanakṣaropadeśa.

Another of Śāntarakṣita's chief students, Haribhadra, continued the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika line of thought, but he placed particular emphasis on the study of the Prajñāpāramitā. He wrote an important commentary (Āloka) elucidating the Eight Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā in light of the Abhisamayālamkāra. Haribhadra was also well-known for his extensive teachings on the Guhyasamāja and other Tantras. His student Buddhajñānapāda became the Vajrācārya at Vikramaśīla monastery. In the rNying-ma tradition, Haribhadra is considered a major lineage holder of the Sems-sde class of the rDzogs-chen. He also continued the line of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika.

Also during this period, Prajñākaragupta became a prominent figure in a trend of Mahāyāna Buddhism that subordinated the subject of logic to the purpose of establishing a firm basis for new principles concerning the concept of Buddhahood and the Buddha-nature. He is noted for his use of the drang-don (neyārtha) approach of 'indirect' meaning in which he incorporates much stylistic ornamentation to elucidate his thesis. Prajñākaragupta's principal work is the Pramāṇavārttika-ālamkāra, in which he interprets Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika from the standpoint of the Mādhyamika-Prāsaṅgika line of thought stemming from Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti. He reiterates the point made by Candrakīrti that absolute reality cannot be cognized by logical methods exclusively. Although Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are both Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrikas, they hold a similar position.

In the eleventh century, Jñānaśrīmitra (c. 980–1030) and Ratnakīrti continued the line of thought presented by Prajñākaragupta. The primary works of Jñānaśrīmitra include the Apoha-prakaraṇa, the Vyaptīcā,

Kāryakāraṇabhāvasiddhi, and the Kṣaṇabhaṅgādhyāya, which consists of four parts: the pakṣadharmādhikāra, the anvayādhikāra, the vyatirekādhikāra, and the ahetuka-vilnāśādhikāra. In these texts, Jñānaśrīmitra elucidates the doctrines of Dharmakīrti and Prajñākaragupta, who were receiving heavy criticism from the brahmanical logicians of that period. Ratnakīrti, a student of Jñānaśrīmitra, continued his work and presented the views of his teacher in more concise terms. His treatises include the Citrādvaitaprakāśavāda, the Īśvarasādhana-dūṣaṇa, the Kṣaṇabhaṅga-siddhi (Anvayamika), the Santānāntaradūṣaṇa, the Sthira-siddhidūṣaṇa, the Apohasiddhi and the Vyāptinirṇaya.

As one of the last major figures in India to follow the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika line, Ratnakīrti's disciple Ratnākaraśānti wrote two important texts, the Antarvyāptisamarthana and the Vijñaptimatratā-siddhi, both of which are available in Tibetan translation. The Tibetan canon also preserves two of his writings on Prajñāpāramitā: the Abhisamayālaṅkāra-pañjikā-sarottama, which relates to the Eight Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā, and the Abhisamayālaṅkāra-vṛtti-śuddhamatī, which elucidates the Twenty-Five Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā.

The Three Dharmacakras and the Implicit and Definitive Meanings of the Buddha's Teachings

The entire body of the Buddha's teachings is traditionally known as the Three Dharmacakras, which refer to the Blessed One's act of setting into motion the Wheel of the Dharma on three occasions, or in three divisions. The division into the Three Turnings also refers to different levels of profundity and different approaches in the Sūtras.

The First Dharmacakra, which presented the issues more fully elaborated in the Abhidharma, contains teachings common to all Buddhist schools. These teachings were especially followed in the vehicles (Yānas) of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. Yet there are teachings of the other Yānas also included in this first period.

The Second and Third Dharmacakras are considered Mahāyāna, with the second focused on the Prajñāpāramitā. These teachings were elaborated in Mādhyamika doctrines. The third Dharmacakra introduces the concepts of Tathāgatagarbha (de-bzhin-gshegs-pa'i-snying-po) and ālayavijñāna (kun-gzhi-rnam-shes), as well as the threefold division of reality that played a central role in Yogācāra.

The different Yānas, and hence the teachings of the Three Dharmacakras, are individually tailored to the differing needs of individuals wishing to pursue a spiritual course. Each discipline of study and practice emphasizes a different aspect of approach to the Buddha's teachings. For this reason, it became important to determine how the different teachings were related to one another. The Buddha addressed this issue in presenting a distinction between teachings of provisional meaning and those of direct and definitive meaning.

As he taught, the Buddha would sometimes use conventional language, incorporating the more popular viewpoints of his day, so that he could be readily understood by the average person. At other times he spoke specifically about topics which were more difficult to comprehend. For example, the Buddha explained that desire exists because of certain conditions, but there is no one or abiding self that desires. These distinctions generally led to two levels of statements: one that was made in more popular terms, and one that was made in more exacting language.

Statements made in more popular terms may have provisional meanings which either do not express, or express only indirectly, the real meaning. Often an evaluation has to be made of the extent to which a statement is to be interpreted literally or the extent to which the meaning is implied. For example, if we hear the statement, "Skyflowers are above time," we can be almost certain that we cannot understand the statement simply through its apparent meaning, because 'time' cannot exist in a spatial relationship which the preposition 'above' implies. Therefore, this statement is either nonsense or it is pointing to a deeper implication.

In addition to this provisional or conventional meaning, statements can also have a definite, direct, or 'real' meaning through the use of definitive statements that lend themselves to deeper implications. Inherent in such statements is the compatibility of the literal interpretation with the actual intent of a given expression.

The spirit of a given teaching is not the letter, or the words themselves, but the meaning. If the meaning is implicit or indeterminate, and hence must be assumed, it is a drang-don teaching. A passage from the Tibetan version of the Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra clarifies the importance of clearly perceiving this distinction between the provisional and the definitive meanings of the Buddha's teachings:

It is not necessary to act like those who look at a finger, Mahāmati. It is as if one were to point something out to somebody with his finger and the

latter obstinately looked only at the fingertip. In the same way, O Mahāmati, like veritable babes, common foolish ones remain attached to this fingertip which one calls literal interpretation, and they would die being thus attached to the fingertip which one calls the 'letter'. Because they have neglected the meaning intended by the fingertip, which one calls literal interpretation, they are not able to penetrate to the Absolute [truth].

Thus, early masters of Buddhism placed the two levels of statement found in the Sūtras into these two categories: the provisional (drang-don, neyārtha) and the 'real' or definitive (nges-don, nītārtha). Those Sūtras which fall into the category of provisional meaning (drang-don) may be taken to be generalizations of a given doctrine or doctrines. Such texts are usually easier to understand and are often intended for persons who are insufficiently prepared to receive more philosophical teachings. Texts of an explicit and definitive meaning are more difficult to grasp because they are generally phrased with more precision and draw upon more exacting terminology.

Throughout the centuries, Buddhist masters have had differing approaches in determining the distinction between drang-don and nges-don. The Buddha undoubtedly foresaw that later followers of the Buddhadharma would have difficulty in choosing between the drang-don and nges-don divisions of meaning. Therefore, he prophesied in the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra that Asaṅga would be the one to establish the criteria for the distinction between drang-don and nges-don. Although there are a number of logically valid ways of making the distinction, the majority of scholars favor Asaṅga's method of determination, which puts an emphasis on meaning rather than on the mere categorization of texts.

Attempting to follow the criteria set forth by Asaṅga, schools that followed the Mahāyāna began pointing out that those texts transmitted openly from the earliest times are almost exclusively of the drang-don division—their meanings need to be drawn out. A Third Turning Sūtra such as the Saṃdhinirmocana, on the other hand, is a nges-don text, because it offers clarity through the use of definitive statements. The term saṃdhi can be understood in this sense, referring to a 'connection' or 'bridge' that serves to make explicit what the Buddha intended or expressed implicitly in other teachings. According to some commentators, all the texts of the Third Turning are held to be nges-don. The Second Dharmacakra, according to this system, has components of both drang-don and nges-don.

A single method of categorizing the Dharmacakras was not followed by all schools. Even the two divisions of the Mādhyamika, the Svātantrikas and the Prāsaṅgikas—in the process of setting their doctrines into precise philosophical terms—had different ways of interpreting the various divisions within the Dharma.

According to the proponents of the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, the Second Dharmacakra, which contains the teachings of śūnyatā, is of direct meaning (nges-don), whereas the First and Third Turnings are considered to contain the teachings of assumed meaning (drang-don). Many of the Svātantrika, on the other hand, accepted the Third Turning as nges-don. This approach fit with their willingness to make use of Yogācāra teachings within their system.

One disagreement between Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika Mādhyamikas centered around the interpretation of Tathāgatagarbha, particularly as set forth in the ten so-called Tathāgatagarbha-sūtras⁵ and in the Uttaratantra, considered a text of the Third Turning. The Prāsaṅgika strongly considered these teachings as drang-don, while others accepted them as nges-don.

The drang-don approach of provisional meaning and the nges-don approach of definitive meaning should not, however, be considered as mutually exclusive, for the one follows the other, much as a bridge might lead towards the island of enlightenment. In this sense, the drang-don approach lays the foundation for the nges-don.

All too often religious or spiritual language ends up in dogma that hems the individual in, forcing acceptance of that which is static, as opposed to that which is suggestive. It is for this reason that Dharma texts have used both approaches delineated above. A 'blanket' systematization of the Three Dharmacakras in terms of their assumed or real content or meaning can have the unintended effect of again turning teachings into dogma, oversimplifying and leading to philosophical bias. For instance, although the First Dharmacakra was placed exclusively in the drang-don division, within the First Turning are contained Sūtras that are nges-don in significance. Some Jo-nang-pa, dGe-lugs-pa and Sa-skya-pa lamas,

5. The ten Tathāgatagarbha Sūtras are: Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra, Dhāraṇīśvara-rājabaripṛcchā (Tathāgatamahākaraṇā-nirdeśa-sūtra), the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, Ārya-aṅgulimāliya-sūtra, Jñānalokālamkāra-sūtra, the Śrīmālādevī-simhanāda-sūtra, Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa-parivarta, Mahābherihāraka-sūtra, Avikalpapraveśa-dhāraṇī, and Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra.

such as Kun-mkhyen Dol-po-pa, Tsong-kha-pa, and others, attempted to provide standardized definitions of the contents and doctrinal emphasis for the Three Dharmacakras. Although this approach has value, it can also support rather static interpretations.

The rNying-ma lama Mi-pham (Jam-dbyangs rNam-gyal-rgya-mtsho, 1846–1912) followed Asaṅga's distinctions between the two divisions of meaning. Rather than grouping the texts of the various Dharmacakras into drang-don and nges-don divisions, and then accepting some and rejecting others as definitive according to these divisions, Lama Mi-pham emphasized the interconnection between the teachings of the Three Dharmacakras. In doing so, he pointed out the interplay of such terms as 'openness' (stong-pa-nyid, *sūnyatā*) and 'radiance' ('od-gsal-ba, *prabhāsa*), 'open-ended facticity' (ngo-bo) and 'presentational immediacy' (rang-bzhin). Stong-pa-nyid and ngo-bo are emphasized in the Second Dharmacakra, whereas 'od-gsal-ba and rang-bzhin play a more active role in the Third Dharmacakra. In actuality, both standpoints are talking about the same level of reality, but in two different ways, which is the meaning of 'interpenetration' (zung-'jug, *yuganaddha*). From this standpoint, *sūnyatā* is not looked upon as 'nothingness' or 'emptiness', which would be a negation of existence, but as an open and pure radiance, a kind of luster. *Sūnya* (stong-pa) is thus viewed as being ever-present in an utter freedom from concretizations and determinate characteristics. This description is also accompanied by the term ngo-bo, which refers to the pure fact or facticity of the experience, its counterpart being rang-bzhin, the presentational immediacy of the experience.

Without the dynamic interplay of stong-pa-nyid and 'od-gsal-ba, or ngo-bo and rang-bzhin, these two approaches could become doctrines leading to the extremes of nihilism or eternalism. It is the very function of 'interpenetration' that keeps this from occurring. Together they function like the sun and its radiance—you cannot have the one while excluding the other.

This idea of interpenetration (coincidence) is intimately related with the Tantras, which are linked to the Third Turning emphasis on the experiential approach to knowledge. The Uttaratantra, one of Ārya Maitreya's Five Treatises, is placed with the Third Dharmacakra because it explains the application of the various philosophical principles previously set forth. It serves as a bridge between the Sūtras and the Tantras.

'Bri-gung-skyob-pa (Rin-chen-dpal, 1143–1218), the twelfth-century lama who originated the 'Bri-gung school and who was considered to be

an emanation of Nāgārjuna, contributed greatly to a clarification of the distinction between the various topics of the Three Dharmacakras and their division into the two categories of assumed and definite meaning. The more unified approach of looking at the various Yānas propounded by Lama Mi-pham was also emphasized by mNga'ris Paṇḍita. sPo-ba sPrul-sku (mDo-sngags-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma, b. 1900) also wrote a stylistically beautiful discourse on the Three Dharmacakras and their relation to the two divisions of provisional and definite meaning, based upon Lama Mi-pham's previous work. All of these lamas support Asaṅga's original distinctions. In the rNying-ma tradition alone, hundreds of pages of explanation have been written about this highly technical subject.

The Eighty-Four Mahāsiddhas

During the eighth through the twelfth centuries, the Buddhist tradition in India continued to center around monastic settlements. There, a strong focus on Vinaya practice was balanced by careful inquiry into the philosophical and experiential basis of the Dharma. At the same time, the intellectual aspect of Buddhism had been strongly developed. As an additional element in this blend, the Mahāsiddha tradition re-emphasized the importance of realization through direct experience of the Buddha's teaching.

The Mahāsiddhas were accomplished yogis who, through the diligent practice of a wide range of meditative techniques suitable to their particular natures, demonstrated that Buddhahood in one's lifetime is indeed possible. Through their activities the Vajrayāna teachings became widely known.

In the context of Indian religious culture, the term siddhi has the specialized meaning of 'powers', more specifically extra-normal powers arising naturally as a byproduct of meditation and yogic practice. Within Indian Buddhism, siddhi means 'accomplishment', and a siddha is 'one who is accomplished'. A Mahāsiddha is thus a highly accomplished practitioner.

The Buddhist tradition distinguishes different types of siddhi. The first type could be termed worldly siddhi, the supernormal faculties such as the ability to fly or to control the elements. Such accomplishments are said to be obtainable through other methods besides those outlined by the Buddhist tradition. However, within the Buddhist context these siddhi were never taken as ends in themselves, but merely as incidental abilities

resulting from heightened awareness. Such powers, it was warned, may be more of a hindrance than a help, as they can divert the practitioner's attention from the goal of enlightenment. Although the path of worldly siddhi is sometimes regarded as an aspect of the Path of Accumulation, if the practitioner's motives are not pure and he or she accomplishes siddhi out of a desire for personal power rather than the wish to benefit all sentient beings, he may fall into an enmeshing trap of egotism. To avoid such diversion, the practitioner is urged first to strive to attain the superior siddhi, and then the transworldly siddhi which is Buddhahood. This superior siddhi is obtainable only by following the Dharma.

Traditionally, as Buddhism developed in India, there were recognized eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, who, through the power of their efforts in following the Vajrayāna path, attained enlightenment in a single lifetime. These eighty-four siddhas came from all backgrounds and social positions; many belonged to the lower caste, and thus worked in rather menial positions. Adopting the path of the Tantric yogin, they often disregarded conventions of the orthodox Sangha and expressed an all-encompassing spontaneity. Among the Mahāsiddhas were Catrapa the beggar, Kantali the tailor, Acinta the woodseller, Pacari, who sold pastries, Ṭeṅgipa the rice husker, and Mīnapa the fisherman who, having been swallowed by a large fish, meditated in its belly for twelve years.

The Mahāsiddhas were often taught by celestial Bodhisattvas or Ḍākinīs, who, understanding that all activity can be an expression of Buddha-nature and that any situation is an opportunity to cultivate an enlightened mind, offered instructions uniquely suited to the individual needs of the aspirant. Spontaneity and freedom thus became an expression of their meditative insight, and such qualities typify the accounts of many of the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas.⁶

Camaripa, the cobbler, was instructed to sew the leather of the reaction patterns and conceptual activity with the cords of the eight worldly concerns (gain and loss, pleasure and pain, praise and blame, and fame and disgrace) on the board of friendliness and compassion, using the guru's instructions as the drill to produce the wonderful 'shoe' of the Dharmakāya.

Koṭali, the mountain man, received special instructions on cultivating the Six Pāramitās by hoeing the mountain of the mind.

6. For an account of the lives the Mahāsiddhas, see *Buddha's Lions*, by Abhayadatta, translated into English by James Robinson (Dharma Publishing 1979).

Kamparipa, the smith, received instructions in *rtsa-rlung-yoga*. He was told to visualize perceptual activity as the smith, to light the fire of knowledge with conceptions as the coal, to use the right and the left flow-patterns (*rtsa*) as the bellows and the central flow pattern as the anvil, and then to hammer into usable forms the iron of the three poisons (attachment, hatred, and ignorance).

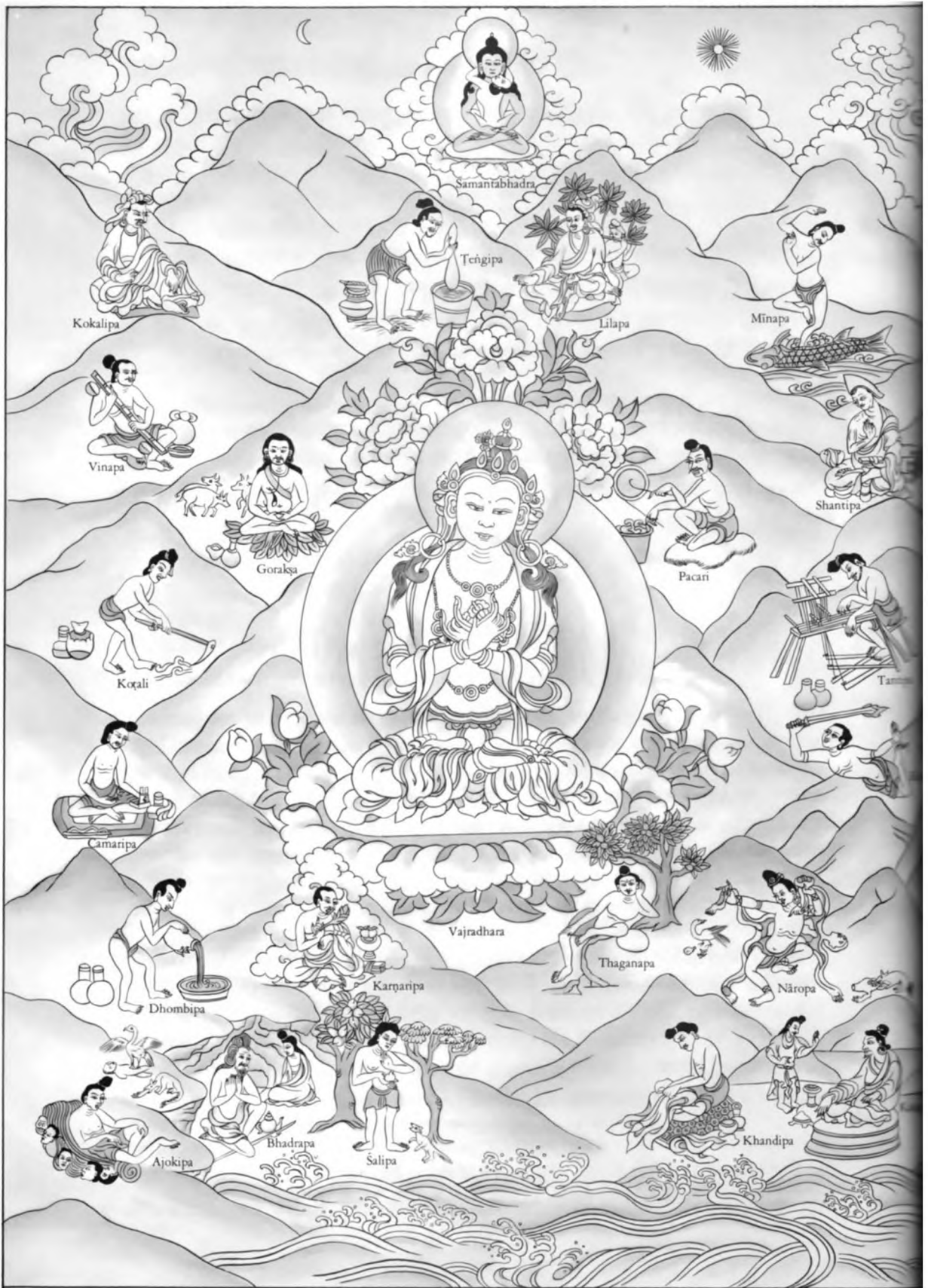
Ajoki, whose name means ‘lazy man’, was given practices he could do lying down. He often resided in cemeteries, which were utilized by many Siddhas for increasing their realization of impermanence.

Nāropa, like many of the Mahāsiddhas, had to undergo severe hardships under the hand of his guru, Tilopa, who had attained enlightenment through his practice of pressing oil from sesame seeds.

Kucipa, who suffered from a tumor on his neck, was instructed by Nāgārjuna to imbibe pain as the path and to meditate on the growth as the Developing Stage of the path. Through his practice the growth grew larger, and as he became discouraged, he was further instructed to meditate on all existents as being contained in the tumor, making this the practice of the Fulfillment Stage. In this manner, he obtained enlightenment and his tumor disappeared.

The guru, embodying enlightened understanding, realizes that the individual’s greatest attachment or fear may actually be transformed into an asset to his own freedom. King Kaṅkana, who was attached to beauty, was instructed to blend into one the ‘unattached mind’ and the luster of the jewels on his bracelet. Vīnapa, who loved nothing more than playing the *vīnā*, was told to give up the idea of separate tones and to combine sound and its perceptual components into one. Similarly, Gorura, the bird-catcher, learned to join the songs of birds and their individual notes into one, and then to abandon even the notion of sound. The Siddha Shalipa overcame his fear of wolves by meditating on all sounds as being identical with the howl of the wolf. The Brahmin Bhadrapa overcame his pride in caste and conquered illusory existence while meditating in a cemetery. Lūyipa received his name due to his diet of fish-entrails, which he assumed after a *Ḍākinī* showed him the need to free his mind from categories and distinctions.

Kukkuripa attained the worldly siddhi and grew attached to dwelling in the Heaven of the Thirty-three. However, having been moved by compassion, he returned to help a dog that he had left in his cave. When he



Samantabhadra

Teṅgipa

Lilapa

Minapa

Kokalipa

Vinapa

Gorakṣa

Pacari

Shantipa

Koṣali

Tamara

Camaripa

Vajradhara

Thaganapa

Nārōpa

Dhombipa

Karṇaripa

Ajokipa

Bhadrāpa

Śālipa

Khandipa



Vajrasattva



Ghandapa



Jalandhar



Telipa



Virupa



Dharmapa



dGa' rab-rdo-rje



Dhokaripa



Medhina



Jogipa



Caluki



Gorura



Kambala



Kaṅkanapa



Lucika



Mahipa



Kucipa



Dharmapa



Acinta



Laksminkari



Nalina



rDo-ri-snying-po



Jayānanda



Nagana



Capari



Campaka



Kumaripa



Caurāngi



Manibha



Kalakala



Kanakhalā



Makhālā



Śrī Sīpha



Kantali



Sārabhaksā



Nāgabodhi



Kirava



Samudra



Putali



Kapalapa



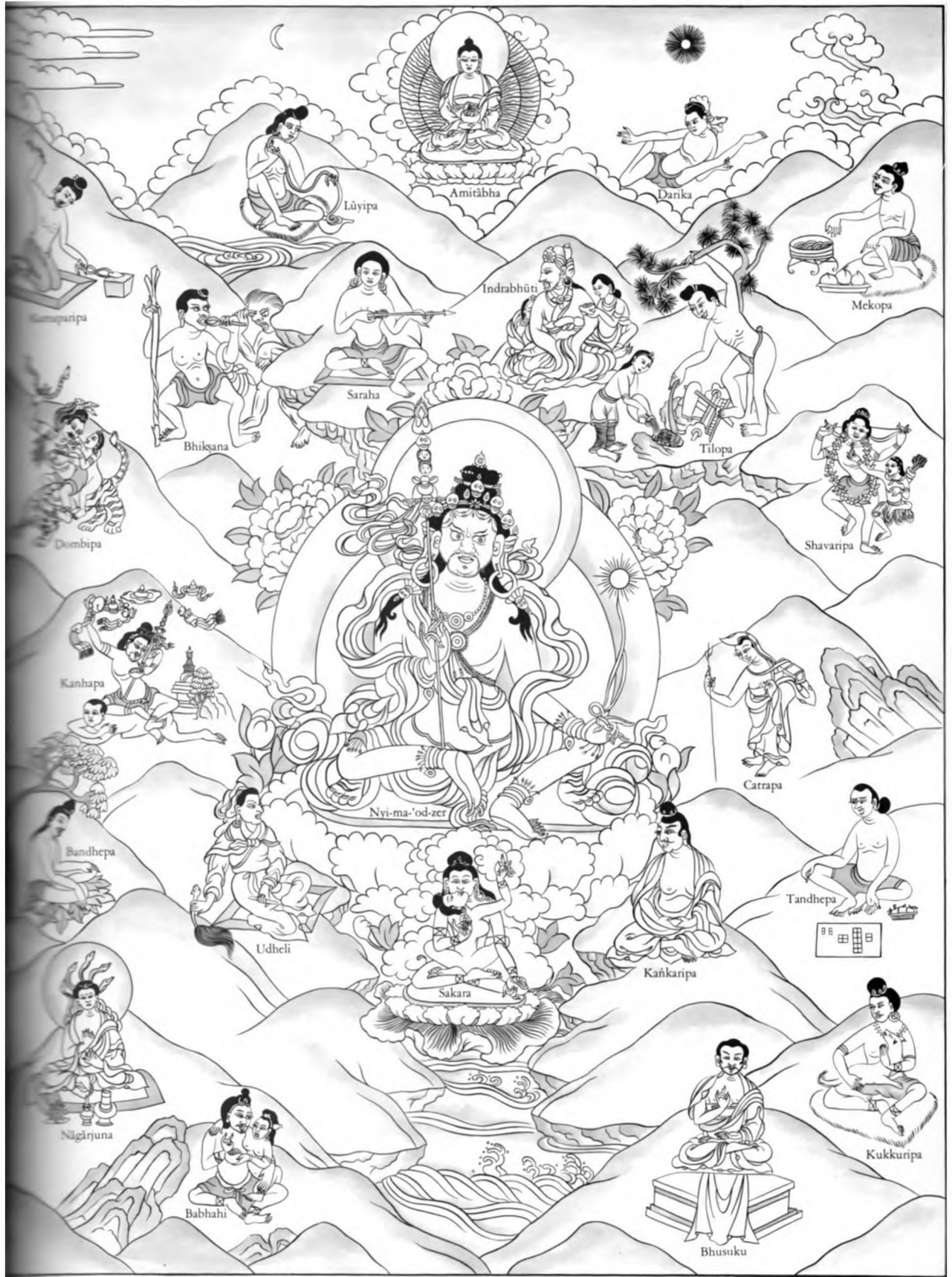
Panaha



Vyalipa



Anāṅga



Amitābha



Lüyipa



Darika



Mekopa



Bhisana



Saraha



Indrabhūti



Tilopa



Shavaripa



Nyi-ma-'od-zer



Kanhapa



Catrapa



Bandhepa



Udhehi



Tandhepa



Sakara



Kañkaripa



Nāgarjuna



Babhahi



Bhusuku



Kukkuripa

arrived, he found that the dog was actually a Ḍākinī who granted him the highest siddhi.

Perhaps the most well-known of the Mahāsiddhas was the arrow-maker, Saraha, who was born the son of a Ḍākinī. He lived as a Brahmin by day and a Tantric practitioner by night. Accused of drunkenness, he proved his freedom from ordinary worldly restraints by drinking molten copper. Impressed with his abilities, the king, the queen, and the people requested his teaching. He responded with the 'Three Cycles of Songs (Dohā)'—the 'King's Dohā', the 'Queen's Dohā,' and the 'People's Dohā'.

Later, Saraha resided in a solitary place with a fifteen year old girl. One day he requested that she prepare some radishes for him. She returned with radishes in buffalo yogurt, only to find Saraha sunk deep in meditation, where he remained for twelve years. Arising from meditation, he asked for his radishes. After being told by his companion that, after twelve years, the radishes no longer existed, he told her that he would go then to the mountains to meditate. As he was leaving, she said to him: "A solitary body does not mean solitude . . . the best solitude is that of the mind free from names and concepts. . . . In twelve years of meditation you did not get rid of the idea of radishes. . . ." Saraha realized that this was true, and, abandoning his attachment to names and concepts, he gained supreme siddhi.

The Mahāsiddhas played an important role in the development and propagation of Vajrayāna Buddhism. In many of the biographies, we are told that on meeting the guru, the Siddha is given empowerment into the Tantras, most often the Anuttara-yoga Tantras of the Guhyasamāja, Hevajra, or Cakrasaṃvara. The eighty-four Mahāsiddhas are credited with having compiled many Sādhana preserved today in the Tibetan Canon.

Events Surrounding the Flourishing and Decline of Buddhism in India

About 320 C.E., the Gupta Dynasty was established in India as a result of the marriage of Candragupta, a local ruler in Magadha, to a daughter of the ancient Licchavi aristocracy. Earlier, the Licchavi clan had become part of the independent Vṛji Republic. This was also the period of the great Buddhist masters Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, who, it is likely, lived long enough to see Pāṭaliputra rise again to become a great center of political unification. This unification occurred through the efforts of Candragupta's

successor, Samudragupta (c. 335–376). Samudragupta reinstated a central government for northern India and ceased to permit the feudal lords and Śāka vassals to maintain a purely independent status.

The period of Gupta supremacy provided the conditions which enabled Indian culture to rise to its highest peak of achievement; it was a time of great peace and prosperity for India. Travelers could move freely through the countryside without fear of roaming bandits, and order prevailed. Although many sacrificial forms and rituals as outlined in the Vedas were restored and the worship of the Brahmanical pantheon was revived, Buddhism also flourished strongly during this time.

Towards the end of the fifth century, the Hephthalites or 'White Huns', Indo-European tribes from Central Asia, began to cause the Gupta Dynasty great alarm. By the beginning of the seventh century, they were seriously threatening many of the established Buddhist institutions in the northwest. A Hephthalite by the name of Mihirakula destroyed several Buddhist monasteries and executed a number of monks. At the same time, Saśaṅka, described as a fanatical Śaivite king of Bengal, attempted to destroy the Bodhi Tree at Gayā. Internal dissensions of the royal family and the revolts of the provincial governors or feudal lords also apparently contributed to the downfall of the Guptas.

The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsüan-tsang, who traveled throughout India between the years 629 to 645, observed that the influence of Buddhism was showing definite signs of weakening. Some of the great monasteries were already in ruins and a number of places of pilgrimage were not well frequented. However, he also noted that both the spirit of Buddhism and the lineages of the Buddha were still strong. There were prosperous monasteries, such as Nālandā, which, under the patronage of the kings of the Pāla Dynasty, would remain principal centers for Buddhist learning until the Muslim invasion around the eleventh century.

After the downfall of the Guptas in the sixth century, King Harṣa came to power. His was a career of conquest and successful military leadership, resulting in the seizure of much of northern India, although Kashmir, western Punjab, Nepal, and a few other areas remained independent. Harṣa-vardhana (Śīlāditya) demonstrated much tolerance and respect for Buddhism and the Buddhist Sangha. Although he also supported Brahmanical religious establishments, later in life he showed a distinct partiality to Buddhism, and even outlawed the slaughter of animals. Guṇaprabha, the great Vinaya master of Mathurā, claimed the king as one of his students.



Vikramasīla For many centuries this university was a renowned center of Buddhist scholarship.

Harṣa erected thousands of Buddhist Stūpas on the banks of the Ganges, and founded a number of monasteries at the sacred places of the Buddhists. On the west bank of the Ganges he built a large monastery and a one-hundred-foot-high tower in which he placed a golden image of Śākyamuni Buddha. Every morning a small golden image of the Buddha was carried in splendid procession from the royal palace to the tower. After the procession was over, the king made offerings to the image of innumerable silken garments decorated with precious gems. This solemn ceremony was repeated every day. About a month after the monastery was built, it suddenly caught fire. As Harṣa was observing the scene from the top of a Stūpa, a fanatic would-be assassin with knife in hand rushed towards him. After seizing the man and delivering him to his magistrates, the king ordered him to be interrogated. He confessed that he had been bribed by certain Brahmins who were infuriated at the great favor shown by the king towards the Buddhists. After capturing the instigators of the plot, King Harṣa banished five hundred Brahmins to the frontiers of India.

After meeting the Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang, Harṣa sent an envoy to the Chinese emperor T'ai-tsung in order to initiate greater cultural and religious exchanges between India and China. The Chinese emperor responded by sending three delegations to India, the last of which left China in 646. By the time the delegation arrived, Harṣa had died and

there was no clear heir to his throne. A militant usurper by the name of Aruṇāśva (Ārjuna) ordered Harṣa's troops to forcibly drive out the incoming Chinese delegation. After a few of the envoys were killed, the rest fled to Tibet.

Upon hearing of Aruṇāśva's treachery, the Tibetan King Srong-btsan-sgam-po ordered the powerful Tibetan army into India. Assisted by the Chinese, they besieged the Indian stronghold at Kānyakubja and rendered Aruṇāśva powerless. Thus, for a time India had to pay 'tribute' to China. During this military expedition, Srong-btsan-sgam-po temporarily occupied and had complete control of nearly every province of northern India. Because of the sheer strength and magnitude of his forces, the conquest was made without bloodshed; the Indian forces were defeated by fear alone. One consequence of this carefully executed campaign was that Srong-btsan-sgam-po's army were able to successfully remove numerous Buddha relics to Tibet before they could be damaged or destroyed.

Buddhism's last phase of royal patronage in India was under the Pāla kings of Bengal and Bihār, whose dynasty emerged at the end of the eighth century and lasted for four centuries. Essentially the entire Pāla Dynasty supported the Buddhist Sangha, and the monasteries at Bodh Gayā, Nālandā, and Vikramaśīla became active once again. During this period Buddhism also became officially recognized in Tibet.

Dharmapāla (c. 770–810), undoubtedly the greatest king of Bengal, ruled for more than thirty-two years. He founded many Buddhist monasteries, but his greatest achievement was the founding of Vikramaśīla University, which soon almost rivaled Nālandā. Dharmapāla's successor was Devapāla (c. 810–850) who remodeled the vihāra of Odantapurī, which had been built by Gopāla (d. 780), the father of Dharmapāla. The Vinaya master Śākyaprabha was born during Gopāla's reign, and it was during this period that the Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita journeyed to Tibet. Impressed with the architectural beauty of the Odantapurī monastery, Śāntarakṣita modeled bSam-yas, the first monastery in Tibet, after that magnificent vihāra.

During the reigns of King Dharmapāla and his successor Devapāla, a number of Buddhist logicians, scholars, Vinayadharas, and masters of the Prajñāpāramitā gained fame throughout India. One of these was Dharmapāla's teacher Haribhadra. Other learned masters who lived during the reign of King Dharmapāla were Buddhajñānapāda, Rāhulabhadra, Buddhaguhya, Buddhaśānti, and the master Kamalaśīla.



Nālandā University This famous center of learning near the banks of the Ganges, only a small portion of which is shown above, played a crucial role in the development and maintenance of the Buddhist philosophical tradition over a millenium.

The reign of the seven principal Pāla rulers continued in Bengal up to the time of Atīśa (982–1054), who was Vikramaśīla’s foremost teacher. In fact, the Pāla Dynasty of Buddhist kings was centered at Vikramaśīla. Both Odantapurī and Vikramaśīla were still quite active teaching institutions during the time of Nāropa (1016–1100). But after the demise of the Pāla Dynasty, Vikramaśīla and Odantapurī were converted partially into fortresses. Eventually, the Turks sacked these two great vihāras, burning them to the ground and massacring a number of ordained monks. The invaders later built a fort from the ruins of Odantapurī.

From the ninth century onwards, India was tossed in a turbulent sea of social change. Still, it has been suggested that the demise of Buddhism in India was not due to persecution as such, but to the development of a new form of devotional Hinduism, which made a vigorous emotional appeal to the common person. India at this time was a great melting pot of religions. The persistent tendency of Hinduism is to assimilate, and the

Hindus incorporated many of the teachings of the Buddha into their own beliefs and practices. The Buddha was eventually included within the Hindu pantheon and is still regarded by more orthodox Hindus as one of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.

The waning of Buddhism in India may also have been linked to its refusal to become incorporated within the caste system, by its loss of royal patronage, and by the influence of two strong proponents of the new Hindu religion—Kumārilabhaṭṭa (c. 700) and Śaṅkara (c. 788–820). Śaṅkara, one of the great Hindu philosophers, was very much an independent thinker. His philosophical views tended to go against the developing forms of devotional Hinduism, and through his repeated debates with the Buddhists, he was forced to move in the direction of Buddhist philosophy. As a result of his contact with the Buddhists, many of his doctrinal principles came very close to the basic Buddhist premises. As Śaṅkara's influence within the Hindu community grew, there was a tendency for Buddhism to be absorbed into Indian culture and lose its significance as an independent system.

During the seventh century, Islam was arising in the Middle East, but it was too absorbed in westward expansion and in conflict with the Byzantine Empire of Constantinople to look eastward beyond Iran. Early in the eighth century, however, the recently conquered and aggressive Turks began to move into and overshadow many areas of traditional Indian civilization. The Kashmiri king Lalitāditya (c. 724–760) was able to protect his domain against these incoming forces of Islam, but the movement was gaining strength.

Early in the eleventh century, India was experiencing economic difficulties due to famine and constant invasions by 'outsiders' (kḷa-kḷo, mleccha). The Buddhist Sangha was forced to leave many of the places where they had settled—a trend which at various times in history seems to have played an important role in the expansion of Buddhism outside of India. For example, the Mūlasarvāstivādins, who originally settled in the northwest, found it necessary at different eras to move out of India and form new communities in the west and to the south. They thus became a dominant force within the Buddhist communities of Java and Sumatra, and flourished in Tibet as well.

With the invasion of the Turks in the eleventh century, many of the Mahāyāna and Mantrayāna practitioners from the region of Magadha fled to the countries of eastern India for refuge. There they built temples and



The Main Temple at Nālandā Literally thousands of Buddha images have been found in the vicinity of this extraordinary university.

established innumerable Dharma centers, with the help of such Dharma kings as Śobhajāta and Siṃhajāti. Over thirty thousand monks were affected by this migration of Buddhism.

Because the Vinaya is the mainstay of the Buddhadharma, the reduction in the number of Vinayadharas in India weakened the Sangha to the extent that Buddhism survived only within the academic institutions such as Nālandā, Vikramaśīla, Vajrāsana (Bodh Gayā), and Odantapurī. Although Vikramaśīla was probably the last to be destroyed by the invading forces, the living spirit of Buddhism was no longer present during the final days of this institution; in the end, Buddhism was only another branch of study among the Hindu departments.



Between 1001 and 1027 the Muslim Sultan Mahmud raided India on seventeen occasions. During this series of attacks, numerous royal palaces and Buddhist and Hindu temples were looted and desecrated. The Muslim intention was to convert the unbelievers, Buddhists and Hindus alike, to the 'one god' of the Islamic faith. The result was terrible devastation.

In Bengal, the previous Pāla Dynasty was taken over by the Senas, who were strong supporters of orthodox Hinduism and disinclined to support or protect Buddhism. Elsewhere in India, the lesser Hindu kings, militarily conservative and generally incapable of forming any effective cooperative alliances, were eventually overpowered by the continuing raids of the Muslim invaders. However, with the death of Mahmud in 1030, India was spared from further invasion for nearly fifty years.



Meditation Cells at Nālandā Individual practice rooms lined the corridors of the great assembly halls and temples.

A principal Buddhist figure during this time was Abhayākaragupta (‘Jigs-med-’byung-gnas-sbas-pa, d. 1125), a recognized master of the Mahāyāna and Guhya-Mantrayāna. Revered in Tibet as an incarnation of Amitābha, he wrote a number of significant works including the *Munimatālamkāra*, a text which addressed the logical difficulties that occurred in the different interpretations of certain points of the Doctrine. He also authored the *Vajrāvali* (rDo-rje-phreng-ba), a work which was integrated into the system of Ye-shes-zhabs (Jñānapāda) that developed out of the practice of the *Guhyasamāja*, a root tantric text in the Mahāyoga lineages in Tibet. Both Abhayākaragupta and Ratnākaraśānti (Śānti-pa) are regarded as distinguished Vinaya masters, as well as the chief synthesizers and systematizers of the Mādhyamika and Mantrayāna—probably the last significant Buddhist development in India.

By the twelfth century, the Buddhist Sangha was confined to the territory of Bihār. In 1194, the Muslims moved eastward and down the Ganges. Vārāṇasī was captured and in 1199 Bihār was also taken. The Buddhist monks were slaughtered and Nālandā and the other Buddhist

monasteries of Bihār were sacked—their temples destroyed and their libraries turned to ashes. With the destruction of a great number of Indian universities, much of the cultural heritage of India perished forever.

Those who survived the massacres fled to the mountains of Nepal and Tibet; many found lasting refuge at bSam-yas monastery. The monks and paṇḍitas who were left in India were too few to preserve the Buddhist Sanskrit texts that managed to survive the humidity, heat, mealworms, and, of course, the torches of the invaders who continued to pillage northern India for many decades. By the end of the thirteenth century, the time of the Venetian traveler Marco Polo, Buddhism was virtually gone from its motherland.



The Development of Buddhism in Tibet

The Ancestral and Dynastic Origins of Tibetan Civilization

In the history of ancient Tibet, cosmology, myth, and history combine to form a unified view of humanity. To discuss any one of these aspects without considering its relationship with the other two would prove ineffective and misleading. But traditional Tibetan viewpoints, which provide the heritage with a unique cohesiveness, are often ignored in favor of a more analytical approach to Tibetan history. Yet, by not carefully considering the oral tradition and living spirit of a people, one may misinterpret or confuse occurrences which cannot be fully understood apart from their religious or spiritual significance.

A prevalent misunderstanding is that Tibet had no noticeable form of civilization until its adoption of a centralized government during the reign of Srong-btsan-sgam-po, in the seventh century C.E. This misunderstanding is due, in part, to the reliance by many scholars of Tibetan history on Chinese sources which have been known to be colored by the ideological struggles between Taoism and Buddhism which were taking place in China at that time. During various periods, certain Chinese emperors would suppress or support Buddhism, depending upon which had the greater political leverage. China generally considered herself ruler, not only of the Chinese, but of groups of people in bordering regions, all of whom she looked upon as uncivilized.

Chinese accounts of Tibet during the three hundred year period of the T'ang Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) include the works of I-tsing, who

Padmasambhava This image at bSam-yas monastery was blessed by Guru Rinpoche himself.

recorded brief biographies of numerous Chinese pilgrims who went abroad between the reigns of T'ai-tsung and Empress Wu Tse-t'ien in the seventh century.

However, in light of the highly sophisticated civilization that arose with the advent of Buddhism in Tibet, beginning with the reign of Srong-btsan-sgam-po, it is apparent that a well-developed culture was present in Tibet long before the reign of the Buddhist kings. And the Tibetan Empire itself, in this early period, was a politically autonomous power whose lands extended well over one thousand miles, including such areas as Ladakh, Gu-ge, Kashmir, parts of Burma, Chinese Turkestan, Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Gyal-mo-rong.

To get a clear picture of early Tibetan history, one must look at the origin of the Tibetan land, people, and royal dynasties in the light of the early Tibetan chronicles. According to these, the ancient land of Bod (Tibet) before the advent of humanity was filled with mi-ma-yin, or the 'non-human ones'. The term designates spirits, apparitions, and demons in general, all of whom possessed malignant natures.

The Tibetan chronicles also sketch the world as a drama of creation, beginning with the 'essence of the five primary senses', a kind of primordial and undifferentiated potential. Out of this potential was formed a particular kind of being, which we can call the macrocosm: that is, anything that upholds or supports the notion of existence.

The ancient Tibetan equivalent for the macrocosm was the 'cosmic egg' (sgo-nga-chen-po gcig), and what was identified as the microcosm was the 'origin egg' (dung-ti-sgo-nga). This origin egg was the primeval source from which succeeding generations of Tibetans originated. The first generation of Tibetans came about by the breaking of the cosmic egg, which gave rise to six principal tribes (Bod-mi'u-gdung-drug). Each of these was said to have differentiated into three subordinate tribes, making a total of eighteen tribes or clans (Rus-chen-bco-brgyad). In this mythological conception, the 'origin egg' is the archetype of all creative human activity and precedes the notion of dualism by representing the cosmos in its totality. The breaking of the egg symbolizes a fundamental split and the introduction of what may be called a 'cosmological dualism', evidenced by the differentiation into light and dark, good and evil, masculinity and femininity, and so on.

The origin egg was further divided into three principal constituents: the yolk, the white, and the shell. These stood for inner, middle and

outer sections, leading to the idea of the three strata or realms of existence: the upper world (gnam) as heaven; the middle world (bar) as the habitat of human beings; and the lower world, the earth (sa), as the habitat of demons.

Other traditional sources, revered by the Bon-po, present a different account of the 'origin egg', beginning with the 'inert potential of the elements' and proceeding directly to the sphere of the microcosm. Here, the dualistic structure of existence is brought about by means of a mutual co-arising of two origin eggs, one white and the other black. Emerging from the white egg was the beneficent being (phan-byed) symbolizing goodness, light, and everything with positive existence (yod). The black egg yielded the maleficent being (gnod-byed) symbolizing evil, darkness, negativity, and malevolent demons.

From the point of view of human existence, the origin egg and its three elements are seen as the structure of a world horizon permeated with the qualities of Tibet's unique geography. When the origin egg was broken, the white of the egg became the white origin lake, fragments of the shell formed the glacier mountains, and the yolk developed into the six families.

The ideas of the origin egg as the primal substance of creation, and the cosmic egg as that which is prior to creation, come very close to the view of the origination held by the Greek philosopher Anaximander of Miletia (c. 600 B.C.E.), who conceived of Being in terms of an indeterminate infinite prior to the determinate primary element, making a clear distinction between the macrocosm and the microcosm.

In the early Tibetan chronicles there are also various views of the creation and origin of the Tibetan people and of the Tibetan kings. Before the advent of the Bon, it was believed that one's relatives or ancestors continued to exist after death in the realm of the dead—the underworld. As members of this realm, the ancestral spirits were roaming manifestations from the tombs of the dead. This belief in the power of the defunct ancestry led to a doctrine of animism, and to the introduction of malignant spirits that menaced the people, causing sickness, famine, earthquakes, floods, and other disasters.

With the appearance of gNya'-khri-btsan-po, the first king of Tibet (c. 247 B.C.E.), the sphere of the lha, or gods, was linked with the earth through the royal dynastic kings. There were five divisions of these kings, representing a progressive descent from the 'divine' to the



IHa-tho-tho-ri

'worldly' realms. The five divisions of twenty-eight kings ended with IHa-tho-tho-ri gNyan-btsan.

Initially a 'spirit rope' was used by these kings to bind earth to the heaven realm. It is said that the eighth king of the royal succession—the first member of the second grouping, Gri-gum-btsan-po—was slain by an evil minister, causing the spirit rope to be cut forever. The reign of Gri-gum-btsan-po's successor, the ninth king of Tibet, whose name was Bya-khri-btsan-po, marked the beginning of the religion of Bon, whose legendary founder was gShen-rab.

The Bon-po view of existence considered that the boundaries between the heavens, the intermediate world, and the lower world of the demons—between men and gods and between men and the dead—could be crossed by the shaman priests. This resulted in the establish-

ment of special funeral rites and the worship of the celestial lha. The shamans could close the doors of tombs and thus cut the ties human beings had with the world of the dead, while opening the door to the lha metaphorically opened the door to the light radiating from the celestial spheres. The significance of this radical shift was that it totally changed the position of human beings—of the living, in the cosmic sense—and provided them with an entirely new view of themselves and their relation with the life-world.

The Bon-po priests also assisted the royalty both by providing a protective function and by exercising their sacred power to help unite the kingdom, which at that time was more or less a confederation of family-clans. Up to the time of lHa-tho-tho-ri gNyan-btsan (c. 374 C.E.), the integral power of the ancient Tibetan monarchy was divided among the king (btsan-po), the head shaman (gshen-gnyan), and the minister. The king was believed to be the son of the lha and was the continually re-born essence of the divine ancestor. He ascended the throne as the consecutive link in the ancestral principle of reincarnation. This procedure of succession also applied to the shaman and the minister, so that a new trinity of power was installed at the accession of each king.

From the formal emergence of the Bon onward, the royal dynastic kings from the region of Yar-lung continued to serve the essential function of intermediary between heaven and earth.

The Bon-po explanation for the appearance of gNya'-khri-btsan-po, 'the first ruler of men'—who exercised the power of his sacred kingship over the Kingdom of Bod—places him as a descendant from the gNam-gyi-khri-btsun, the place of heaven. The chronicles recount that he descended from the heavens to the peak of Mount lHa-ri-gyang-mtho. He looked around and saw the great beauty of the snow mountain of Yar-lha-sham-po—a beauty like the moonstone in the embrace of the full moon. Twelve herdsmen saw him; when they asked him from where he had come, he pointed towards the heavens. As they had no king, they raised him upon their shoulders, accepting him as their destined king from heaven.

With the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, a connection was established between the origins of gNya'-khri-btsan-po and the royal lines of India. The various traditional accounts, which generally agree with each other on the origin of gNya'-khri-btsan-po, may be summarized as follows:

A son was born to dMag-brgya-pa, the King of the Śākya clan of the Licchavis. He had eyes which closed from below, turquoise eyebrows, teeth like a row of conch shells, and fingers webbed like the king of geese. Fearing that these signs portended great evil, the parents put the child in a copper box and floated it away on the river Ganges. The child was rescued by a farmer. Years later, when he was told about his past, he fled north and was later made ruler of Bod. (The signs such as webbed fingers and teeth like shells, which were attributed to gNya'-khri-btsan-po, are the signs of a Cakravartin, a great king).

An older account connects gNya'-khri-btsan-po with Ajātaśatru, son of King Bimbisāra. King Ajātaśatru made war with another king who was trying to eradicate the Śākya clan. A youth of the Śākyas, who possessed the signs of a Cakravartin, took flight to the glacier mountains of Bod, and became known as gNya'-khri-btsan-po, the first King of Tibet.

The Tibetan dynasty thus became a branch of the Indian dynasty. The introduction of Buddhism provided the king with a further means for the consolidation of his rule by placing the throne on a more spiritually potent foundation. Connecting gNya'-khri-btsan-po with the famous Indian dynasties of the Śākyas or Licchavis introduced into Tibet a tradition of direct clan ties with the historical Buddha. In later times, the Licchavi clan was so highly regarded that inscriptions praising King Srong-btsan-sgam-po, the virtual founder of the Tibetan Empire, always mentioned that he was a descendant of the Licchavi clan.

With the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet, the Tibetans' views concerning their own ancestral roots radically shifted. According to Buddhist tradition, the Tibetan people arose from the union of an Ape-Bodhisattva, an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, with a rock-demoness. As the story is related, the demoness grew enamored of the monkey who was meditating in a cave, and threatened to kill herself if he did not comply with her desires. The monkey, not wishing either to break his meditation or to cause harm to the demoness, asked Avalokiteśvara and Tārā for advice. The deities told him to marry the demoness, and out of this union came six offspring, each signifying one of the six realms of existence: hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, men, jealous deities, and gods. This origin myth, with its explanation of the origins of human beings, is essentially a theory of evolution, inasmuch as it maintains that the different forms of life developed gradually from a common ancestry. It is found in the Ma-ni-bka'-'bum, one of the earliest Tibetan records, authored by Srong-btsan-sgam-po himself.

When Buddhism entered Tibet, the Buddhist explanation of the origin of the Tibetan civilization became so fully accepted that the early beliefs of the origin egg were essentially forgotten. The transition to the newer beliefs may account for some of the differences that exist between accounts of the origins of the Tibetan ancestry and the origins of the dynastic heritage. For instance, the belief that the ancient land of Bod was once submerged in a great lake is, by itself, an outgrowth of the earlier creation myths. But to pass over this description as pure myth would ignore the fact that it is in accord with recent geological findings.

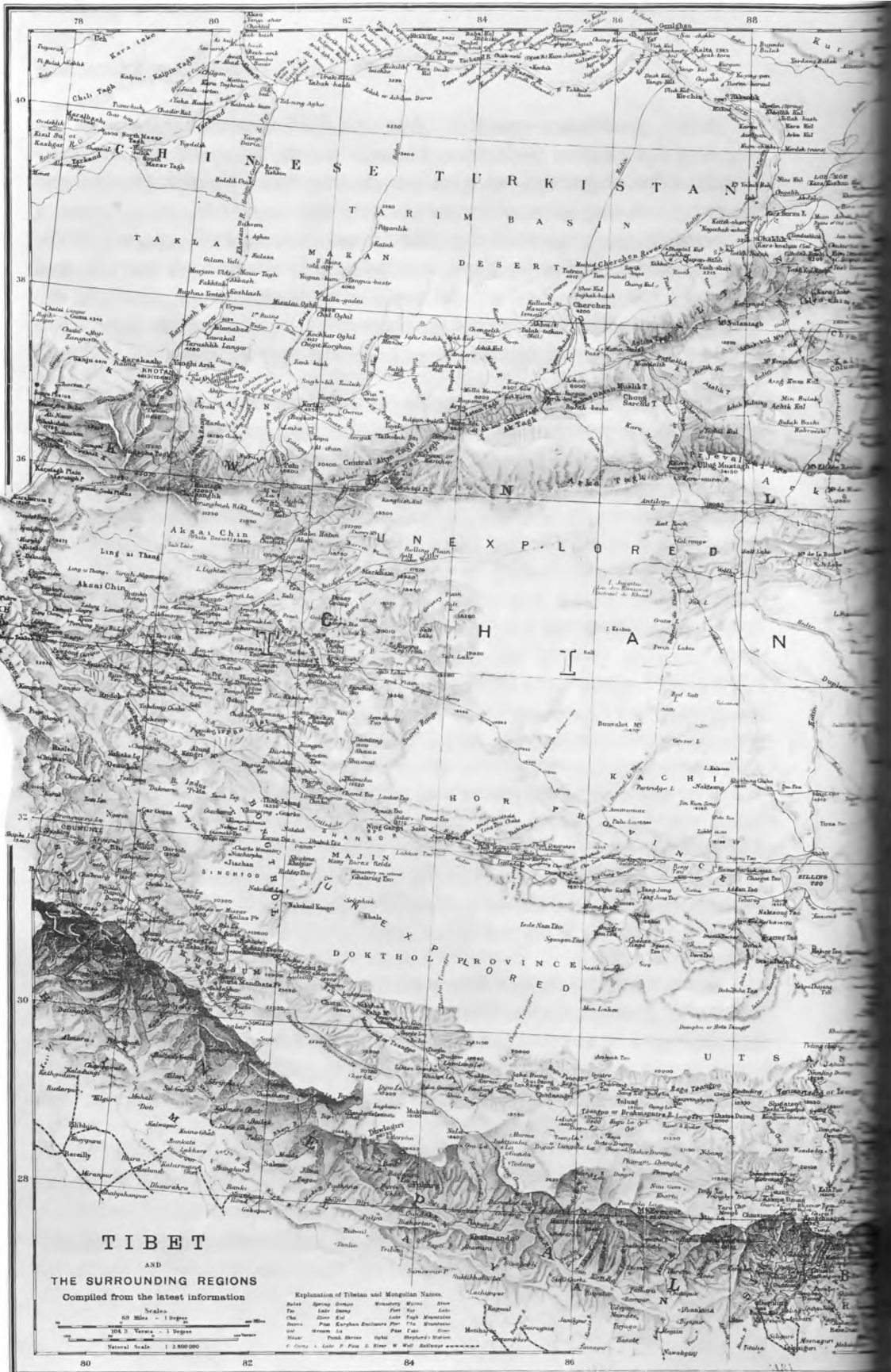
The Tibetan description speaks of an origin lake, obviously of great dimension, surrounded by mountains. The lake recedes over time, giving rise to civilization. The picture painted by geologists, based on recent deductions, is that the Himalayan range and the country of Tibet were formed between forty and sixty million years ago through the collision between the continents of India and Eurasia.¹ During this period, the Indus and Tsang-po valleys in southern Tibet existed as an ocean basin. Geologists presume that the zone of contact between the two continents eventually grew until the ocean basin between the continents was swallowed up. During this interim, a great salt lake must have formed. Geologists further indicate that in the course of collision between the continents, a huge amount of material was displaced, some of which accounts for the formation of the Himalayas.

The great salt lake presumed to have been formed during the collision can be equated with the origin lake described in the Tibetan sources. An observer located at the center of this aquatic zone might very likely view himself as resting on a lake surrounded by a circular mountainous region, which presumably could be covered entirely with glacial formation having the appearance of the whiteness of a huge shell.

Such a comparison of this geological and mythic 'evidence' may be somewhat presumptuous. However, it does tend to illustrate how mythic development evolved out of symbols provided by nature, and how these symbols can just as easily stand for physical realities as for metaphorical expressions of mythic perception.

It is true, however, that the ocean basin existed some fifty million years ago and not during the time that Śākyamuni Buddha walked the

1. Molner, Peter and Tapponier, Paul, "The Collision Between India and Eurasia," *Scientific American*, April 1977, pp. 30-41.

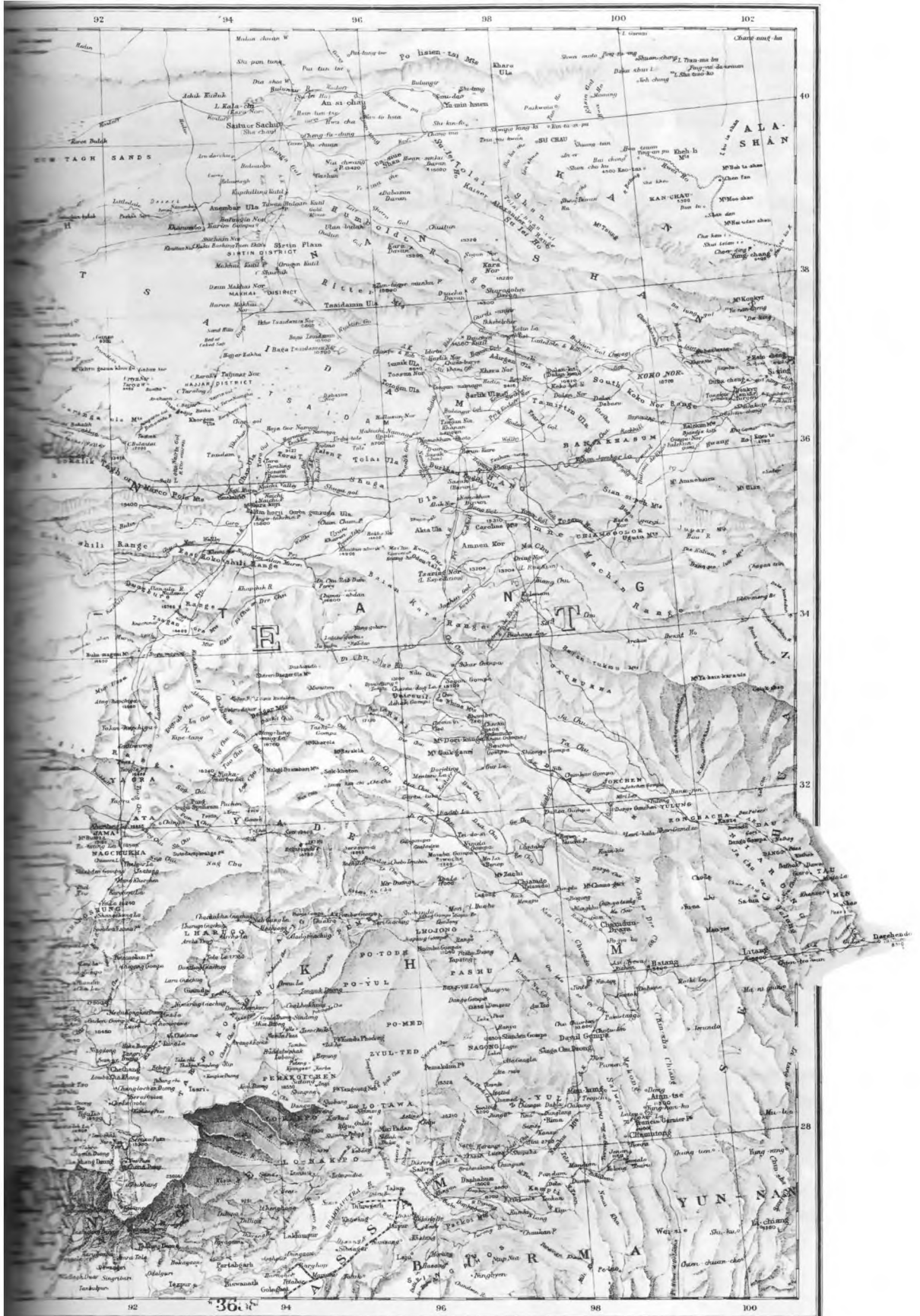


TIBET

AND
THE SURROUNDING REGIONS
Compiled from the latest information

Scales
60 Miles = 1 Degree
104.3 Verge = 1 Degree
Natural Scale 1:8,000,000

Explanation of Tibetan and Mongolian Names
 Salt Spring (Sung) Monetary (Mong) Stone (Sung)
 Lake (Sung) Fort (Sung) Lake (Sung)
 Pass (Sung) Enclosure (Sung) Fort (Sung)
 Pass (Sung) Enclosure (Sung) Fort (Sung)
 Pass (Sung) Enclosure (Sung) Fort (Sung)



earth, as was commonly believed. This linkage undoubtedly came about with the tendency to mix together the origins of the two distinct cultural heritages (Bon and Buddhist) and the two theories of the Tibetan ancestral roots (one for the civilization and one for the dynastic kings). The former follows an evolutionary course, considering the origins of human civilization and viewing the world as an integral cosmos of aeonic duration; the latter extends back in time to particular historical events that provide necessary links between different cultural traditions.

In light of the ease with which new origins for their ancestry were adopted in response to religious or cultural changes, the Tibetans' unusual degree of religious tolerance and flexibility is apparent. The advent of Buddhism actually brought an end to the principal religious and cosmological conceptions of the early Tibetans, which were at the very roots of their heritage.

The Vinaya Lineage in Tibet

Three Vinaya lineages successfully developed in Tibet: the sMad Vinaya, which came to Tibet through Śāntarakṣita, the sTod Vinaya, which was established in western Tibet in the eleventh century, and the Kha-che Vinaya, which came from Kashmir. All three lineages are founded in the Vinaya transmission of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, which originates with the Buddha's son, Rāhula.²

Although by 250 B.C.E. the Sangha had divided into eighteen schools that emphasized different aspects of the teachings, the Vinaya lineage of

2. The information presented here about the Vinaya, Abhidharma, Mādhayamika, and Prajñāpāramitā traditions in Tibet is based on Kong-sprul's Shes-bya-kun-khyab. The full title of this work may be roughly rendered, "The Encompassment of all Knowledge, a Śāstra which Well Explains the Precepts of the Three Trainings, a Treasury of Precious Scripture, Compiled from the Approaches Followed by Each of the Vehicles." This is one of the greatest works to emerge from the nineteenth century Ris-med Movement of eastern Tibet, centered at sDe-dge. Also known as the Treasury of Knowledge (Shes-bya-mdzod), this work was composed at the request of 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po (1820–1892), who prophesied that it would be one of the "Twelve Treasures" Kong-sprul Rinpoche would give to the world. He also urged Kong-sprul to write a commentary on the root verses. This significant work, completed in 1864, demonstrates that just as the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna lead naturally to the Vajrayāna, the methods of the Vajrayāna reach their epitome with the Atiyoga teachings of the rNying-ma rDzogs-chen system.



Srong-btsan-sgam-po

Rāhula survived as an unbroken succession until Śāntarakṣita brought it to Tibet in the eighth century. The Ācārya Jinamitra, the Tibetan Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan, and many others translated various sections of the Vinaya Piṭaka. What was preserved by these early translators was a complete and unaltered translation of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya which the Mahāyānists in India, China, and Tibet had all seen fit to preserve and practice in its original form.

In the seventh century, Srong-btsan-sgam-po, the first of the three great Dharma Kings of Tibet, began his work on behalf of the Dharma. In order to make the Buddhist texts from India available to the Tibetans, he sent his minister Thon-mi Sambhoṭa to India to devise a Tibetan alphabet suitable for the translation of the incoming Buddhist works. As much of Central Asia was under Tibetan influence during this period,



Thon-mi Sambhoṭa

Sūtras and śāstras were brought into Tibet from China and Nepal as well as from India. With his patronage of the Buddhadharma, Srong-btsan-gsam-po prepared his country for the flowering of Buddhism in Tibet, which would come a century later.

Among this Dharma king's innumerable achievements was instituting a general code of conduct which served not only to guide his people but to prepare them for the practice of the Vinaya. Following the suggestions of his two wives, Princess Khri-btsun of Nepal and Princess Kong-jo of China, the king adapted the Vinaya texts provided by Thon-mi Sambhoṭa to the social mores of the Tibetan people. With the translation of the Sūtra known in Tibet as the dPang-skong-phyag-rgya-pa, this gifted translator and linguist provided Tibet with its first text on the subject of spiritual conduct.

Impressed with the sensibility of the Buddhist rules of conduct, the king instituted a legal code of sixteen moral virtues. These sixteen rules may be given as follows:

1. Those who kill, steal, or commit adultery will be fined, otherwise punished, or banished from the country.
2. Take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.
3. Carry on the social tradition of respecting your parents and the elders of the community.
4. Practice non-violence, live without hostility and resentment, and respect those who bring out the wholesomeness in themselves and others.
5. Show genuine friendliness to all, especially relatives and friends, and encourage them when they are in need of support.
6. Be as helpful to your fellow citizens as you would have them be to you.
7. Be unassuming and straightforward in your speech by being honest and not evasive.
8. Follow the healthy influences of others, especially the learned, the wise, and the respected leaders of the community.
9. Practice conservation of material wealth and moderation in consumption of food and drink.
10. Do not use harsh, violent, bitter, or deceptive language to your friends.
11. Pay debts to others in due time.
12. Be straightforward in all financial agreements, and do not cheat others through counterfeiting, deception, or trickery.
13. Practice emotional balance and do not be envious of those who have attained what you desire.
14. Do not cultivate hostile or dangerous people, especially those who seek to upset the community.
15. Words that are spoken should be preceded with reflection—be sparing of words and speak with a genuine concern for others.
16. Do not gossip about the mistakes of others or interfere with the personal affairs of others unless asked for help.

The second great Dharma King of Tibet, Khri-srong-lde-btsan (r. 753) was determined to put Buddhism on a firm foothold. He invited the Bodhisattva Śāntaraḥṣita to Tibet to teach the Dharma. Upon his arrival, Śāntaraḥṣita was beset with insurmountable obstacles in the form of wrathful demons who created floods and earthquakes and who in general launched an all-out attack on the incoming religion, for the Bon-po



Khri-srong-lde-bstan

shamanistic priests knew that the new religion of Buddhism was a major threat to the religion of Bon. Śāntarakṣita, knowing that he himself could not control these demons, suggested to the King that he invite the renowned master Padmasambhava to Tibet. Padmasambhava, having been born in the ancient country of Uḍḍiyāna, and having traveled throughout all parts of the known world, was presently residing in India. He had great knowledge of the shamanistic practices of the time, and thus was well equipped to subdue the demons that were obstructing the development of Buddhism in Tibet.

Upon arrival in Tibet, Padmasambhava began to clear the way for the firm establishment of the Buddhadharmā. King Khri-srong-lde-btsan, Śāntarakṣita, and Padmasambhava then proceeded to establish bSam-yas monastery, which was built in the shape of a maṇḍala following the



Śāntarakṣita

model of the Odantapurī monastery in India. bSam-yas became the first institution of Buddhist learning in Tibet; in later times, it was open to all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and it served as a place of refuge for many Indian paṇḍitas troubled by the gradual decline of Buddhism in India. Upon consecration of the bSam-yas temple by Padmasambhava, the king made plans for the arrival of scores of translators from India, Nepal, Kashmir, and even China, who would create the first comprehensive corpus of Buddhist doctrine in Tibetan. The first to arrive were such masters as Vimalamitra, Śāntigarbha, Dharmakīrti (the Second), and other members of the renowned 108 Mahāpaṇḍitas.

For this early period, the Vinaya was the root and mainstay of the Buddhadharmā. Śāntarakṣita ordained the first seven monks: sBa gSal-snang, Vairotsana, Ngan-lam rGyal-ba-mchog-dbyangs, Nam-mkha'i-



Padmasambhava

snying-po, rMa Rin-chen-mchog, 'Khon Klu-i-dbang-po-bsrung-ba, and La-gsum rGyal-ba-byang-chub. Subsequently, these monks helped the Indian masters with the work of translation, and later an additional three hundred novices were ordained. To announce the success and rapid spread of the Sangha, King Khri-srong-lde-btsan had innumerable pillars erected which contained inscriptions proclaiming the institution of a new religious order for the land of Tibet.

A second significant wave of Indian translators arrived in Tibet guided by sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs who had made the arduous journey to India, and Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan, who, working with various paṇ-ḍitas, headed nearly one thousand apprentice translators. Both of these Tibetan masters were among the twenty-five original disciples of Guru Padmasambhava. At the outset, the fundamental Āgamas and Mahāyāna



bSam-yas Monastery

Sūtras and śāstras were translated in order to lay a firm foundation for the establishment of a viable code of Vinaya derived from the newly translated Vinaya texts. Also at this time a priority was placed on developing a system of standardization for translation.

Along with the written word of the Vinaya came the oral transmission and the beginning of the Mantrayāna tradition in Tibet. In the course of time, King Khri-srong-lde-tsan established twelve meditation centers—the three most noted being mChims-phu, Yer-pa, and dPal Chu-bo-ri—for the transmission of the teachings of the Mantrayāna. Padmasambhava had many of these Mantrayāna teachings hidden, to be discovered and utilized at a later time. The twenty-five great siddhas who came from the meditative centers of mChims-phu were responsible for hiding these treasure-texts in various locations. As Guru Rinpoche had already converted the demonic forces to the role of Dharmapālas, protectors of the Dharma, there were many suitable locations on mountains, or in crevasses, caves, and canyons, where these treasures (gTer-ma) would be safely protected. The Great Guru imparted to these twenty-five



Yer-pa Hermitage

The early meditation centers were built in the valleys around Lhasa as residences for the Indian paṇḍitas and their Tibetan disciples.

siddhas instructions granting them the ability to be reborn at the time and location most auspicious to insure that the texts be recovered. Consequently, these siddhas took rebirth as 108 masterful gTer-stons and teachers of the esoteric Tantras.

Khri-srong-lde-btsan's three sons, Mu-ne-btsan-po, Mu-rug-btsan-po, and Mu-tig-btsan-po, also did much to propagate the Dharma. Mu-ne-btsan-po also made an attempt to equalize the wealth of the people; though unsuccessful, this attempt illustrated the importance of the individual's own motivation in determining his social status.

Mu-tig-btsan-po (r. 800–814), also known as Sad-na-legs, was responsible for the restoration of the temple at Lhasa that had been built by Srong-btsan-sgam-po at the request of his Nepalese wife. Also during his reign, the early translator sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, assisted by Nam-kha'i-snying-po and others, compiled a catalogue (dkar-chag) of the Sūtras and Śāstras translated during the time of King Khri-srong-lde-btsan. The translator 'Khon Klu'i-dbang-po and other early scholars completed this index, which became known as the dKar-chag-ldan-dkar-ma.

Under the reign of King Ral-pa-can (814–836), the first son of Mu-tig-btsan-po, a new catalogue was compiled. It was a resume done on special commission by Indian and Tibetan scholars engaged in editing and unifying the already existing translations. Because of the new gram-



Ral-pa-can

mans which King Ral-pa-can instituted, certain changes in the usage of language were needed. In this later catalogue (which is no longer extant) it was observed that the later editors often took the credit as translators, although these texts had been translated during Khri-srong-lde-btsan's time. These early translators, many of whom were direct disciples of Padmasambhava, were supported by the royalty and devoted their entire lives and all their energies toward the translation of Dharma texts. Their translations, although often grammatically imperfect, had more depth and meaning than the translations of the later periods.

During his reign, Ral-pa-can gave the edict that every seven households of lay people would carry the responsibility of supporting one monk. Through his influence, over one hundred temples and Dharma centers were constructed, enabling many monks to engage in advanced

meditative practices in a conducive environment. In formal assembly, Ral-pa-can also showed his respect for the Sangha by seating the two Buddhist orders of the time—the Red Sangha and the White Sangha—on the dais to the left and to the right of his throne. He put new life into the promulgation of the Sūtras, and particularly the Vinaya, by inviting a number of Indian paṇḍitas to the newly constructed study centers to teach the Tibetan monks and lay disciples.

Some of the Dharma texts brought from India, Kashmir (Kha-che), Za-hor, and other lands and translated during the periods preceding Ral-pa-can's reign were open to conflicting interpretations. Ral-pa-can therefore invited the Indian scholars and translators Dānaśīla, Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi and Śilendrabodhi to Tibet to work with the Tibetan teachers and translators Ratnarakṣita, Dharmatāśīla, and Jñānasena in the standardization of the more difficult terms. Together, these masters edited the existing texts.

The three most honored kings of Tibet—Srong-btsan-sgam-po, Khri-srong-lde-tsan, and Ral-pa-can—all shared in the common concern for the propagation of the Buddhist teachings. Each king represented a significant phase of Dharma activity, and this period is known as the 'Twelve and a Half Happy Generations'.

Up until the year of the enthronement of Glang Dar-ma (836 C.E.), the Vinaya lineage begun in Tibet by Khri-srong-lde-btsan, Śāntarakṣita, and Padmasambhava was very successful, receiving full support by the royal line. Glang Dar-ma, however, opposed Buddhism, and began the wholesale slaughter and expulsion of any Buddhist monks who would not renounce their vows. The Vinaya lineage, as well as the other lineages of transmission, were forced to go underground.

At the time of the suppression of the Doctrine by Glang Dar-ma, three monks from the monastery of dPal Chu-bo-ri were abiding in meditation. These three, who later became known as the 'Three Men from Khams', were sMar Shakya-mu-ne of To-lung, gYo dGe-ba-'byung-gnas of Pho-thong-pa, and Rab-gsal of gTsang. They had been ordained by Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan and others of the first seven monks of Tibet, and were holders of the Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya lineage. Hearing of a monk arriving on foot from the direction of Lhasa, they approached him, asking him news of the Doctrine. Upon finding out that the Doctrine was being completely destroyed, they quickly loaded the necessary books of the Vinaya ('Dul-ba) and Abhidharma (mNgon-pa) onto a mule, and hiding by day and traveling by night, they fled to western Tibet



Bla-chen dGongs-pa-rab-gsal

(sTod-phyogs) to the province of mNga'-ris. Unable to remain there, they continued on their flight to Gar-log and on to the country of Hor (Eastern Mongolia) by a lesser traveled northern route. They had the intention of introducing the Doctrine into this land of a different race and language, but the obstacles were too great. And so, gathering the necessary supplies, they proceeded on to southern A-mdo (mDo-smad).

At A-mdo they met an individual who would play a prominent role in the subsequent propagation of the Doctrine. Upon meeting the three fugitive monks, he requested ordination, but they told him that would be impossible, for a minimum of five monks was required to perform the ordination ceremony. However, seeing that he was a man of virtue and devotion, one of them handed him a text of the Vinaya and said, "Read this! If you believe in what it has to say we will consider arranging



dPal-gyi-rdo-rje

for your ordination.” He read the Vinaya text and, shedding tears, became full of conviction. Seeing this, the three monks made him a novice and gave him the religious name of dGe-ba-rab-gsal. Later on, owing to his sublime mind, he became known as Bla-chen dGongs-pa-rab-gsal, He With Sublime Thoughts. The monks then instructed him to seek out two more monks so that the proper number would be present.

Searching for additional members of an ordination committee, dGongs-pa-rab-gsal encountered dPal-gyi-rdo-rje, the monk who had gone to Lhasa and assassinated Glang Dar-ma. dPal-gyi-rdo-rje was asked to join the committee, but he told them that since he had killed the king he could not be included in the number required. But he gave dGongs-pa-rab-gsal his blessing, and then continued on to his beloved mountains where he spent the remainder of his life in solitude. Bla-chen again set

out in search of others, and upon meeting two Hwa-shang Chinese monks, Ke-lbang and Gyi-phan, the conclave of five monks was finally assembled and conferred full initiation upon him.

After his ordination, Bla-chen studied the Vinaya with the Master Go-rong-seng-ge for fifteen years. For the teachings of the Prajñā-pāramitā, he studied with the venerable Ka-ba 'Od-mchog. And for the Sems-sde, or 'Mind Section' of the rDzogs-pa-chen-po, he studied with gYu-sgra-snying-po. The conclave of five monks meanwhile remained with Bla-chen dGongs-pa-rab-gsal. In his forty-ninth year, Bla-chen went to the vicinity of Mount Dan-tig, on the bank of the rMa-chu River near Lake Ko-ko-nor in A-mdo, where he stayed until his death in 915 or 975.

Ten men who became important to the Vinaya lineage came to Bla-chen requesting ordination. Known as the 'Ten Men of dBus and gTsang', they were Klag-pa-lam-pa Klu-mes-tshul-khrims, Shes-rab-'brin Ye-shes-yon-tan, Rag-shi Tshul-khrims-'byung-gnas, rBa Tshul-khrims-blos-gros, and Ye-shes-blo—all from the province of dBus; and Rab-kha-pa Lo-ston, rDo-rje-dbang-phyug, Shes-rab-seng-ge, and the two brothers 'Od-brgyad-sbung-nyis and U-pa-de-dkar-pa—all from the province of gTsang. After they received initiation under the leadership of Grum Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan, they left, wishing to spread the Vinaya lineage. Klu-mes, however, decided to remain with his teacher, the learned Grum Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan, a disciple of Bla-chen, in order to study the more advanced Vinaya texts.

A year later, Klu-mes, along with five other monks, proceeded to central Tibet. Klu-mes, who carried the sMad Vinaya Lineage, proved to be a very significant figure for the preservation of the Vinaya. Under his direction, Vinaya centers were established in many locations, which enabled numerous monks to become ordained. In order to increase the number of monastic communities, Klu-mes had a number of temples built throughout eastern Tibet. His principal disciples became known as the 'Four Pillars' (ka-ba-bzhi), the 'Eight Beams' (gdung-brgyad), the 'Thirty-two Rafters' (lcam-gsum-bcu-rtsa-gnyis), and innumerable 'Planks' (dral-ma). This lineage extended like a great parasol over the entire province of Khams.

Because Lhasa had been a place of great learning in former times, an entourage consisting of Klu-mes, Lo-ston rDo-rje-dbang-phyug, and their immediate disciples proceeded to the great city. Finding that Lhasa had not recovered from the massacre by Glang Dar-ma, they took

residence in bSam-yas monastery, which was nearly deserted. From there they gradually restored the Sangha.

The Ten Men of dBus and gTsang enabled the Vinaya to be spread to many distant localities. The monks, or Vinayadharas, often went on long journeys outside Tibet, to Mongolia, Turkestan, and even parts of what is now lower Russia (rGya-ser). However, because of language difficulties and strikingly different cultures, the monks were generally unsuccessful in spreading the lineage to these more remote areas.

During the interim of Buddhist suppression, the siddha gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes protected many of the Sūtras and esoteric Tantras that he had collected during his travels throughout the Himalayas. This siddha had perfected the potent exorcisms which he had learned from Padmasambhava and he had become a master at propitiating the 'Protectors of the Dharma' (Dharmapālas). By utilizing these practices, the temples of Lhasa, bSam-yas, and other monasteries escaped destruction, although for a number of decades there was little open expression of the Doctrine in the central provinces.

With the advice and blessing of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, a rNying-ma White Sangha lineage holder, some of the lay Tantrics, who led the life of householders and dwelt in mountain glens, continued to practice religion privately, and hid many of the Sūtras and Śāstras which had been translated up until the time of King Ral-pa-can. Because of this foresightedness, future generations of disciples, scholars, and saints benefited greatly by this ancient heritage. In later times, the monks from Khams were most heartened to see that the majority of the early translations had been preserved.

About this time, three Vinaya lineages, known as the sMad, sTod, and Kha-che, began to emerge in different areas of Tibet. While in eastern Tibet the Lineage of Śāntarakṣita (known as the sMad lineage) continued to flourish, in western Tibet, a new Vinaya lineage appeared, brought to Tibet by King bTsan-po-kho-re (who was descended from the Dharma Kings of Tibet). The king, out of an intense concern for the preservation of the Dharma, had relinquished his throne to his nephew in order to become a monk. Now known as Lama Ye-shes-'od, he invited Śrī Dharmapāla from India for the purpose of promulgating the Vinaya teachings. This lineage became known as the sTod lineage. The third of the Vinaya lineages, the Kha-che lineage, was introduced in gTsang and in Central Tibet by the many Kashmiri paṇḍitas who were invited to Tibet at this time.

The sTod lineage of Lama Ye-shes-'od was also known as the 'meditative lineage' (sgrub-pa'i-brgyud), one of the two principal Indian lineages of the sTod Vinaya, along with the 'lineage of teaching' (bshad-pa'i-brgyud). Out of the intense efforts of these Vinayadharas, the Vinaya Lineage in west Tibet was restored before similar restorations in the central provinces of dBus and gTsang, and was most fruitful. In later times, this lineage was known as Phala rnam-gsum. As prophesied in the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra, Ye-shes-'od was also the founder of the great Tho-ling Monastery.

Under the auspices of Lama Ye-shes-'od, Lo-chen Rin-chen-bzang-po (958–1055) went to India to study with the learned masters of the time. In India he received the Vinaya as well as the Bodhisattva lineages, and upon returning to Tibet he began translating important texts. The great Indian Ācārya Atīśa (Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna, dPal Mar-me-mdzad-ye-shes, [982–1054]), known also as Jo-bo-rje, came to Tibet on the invitation of Byang-chub-'od, a nephew of Lama Ye-shes-'od. Upon meeting Rin-chen-bzang-po, Atīśa was very impressed with his knowledge, saying that if he had known there were such scholars in Tibet, he would not have had to make the journey.

Other noteworthy holders of the Vinaya lineage were rNgog Lo-tśā-ba Blo-ldan-shes-rab, 'Bre Shes-rab-'bar, Phag-mo-gru-pa, and bCom-ldan-rig-ral, as well as the master sGam-po-pa (1079–1153), (recognized as an emanation of Padmasambhava), and the luminary 'Bri-gung-skyob-pa Rin-chen-dpal (1143–1217), who is considered an emanation of Nāgārjuna.

A number of Tibetans went to India at this time to acquire texts and teachings. One of the most famous of these was Mar-pa, the teacher of Mi-la-ras-pa and the student of the Siddha Nāropa. Although the rNying-ma school traces its history to the time of Padmasambhava and the great Dharma kings (and thus is known as rnying-ma, meaning 'ancient') the other three major schools of Buddhism in Tibet—Sa-skyapa, bKa'-brgyud-pa, and dGe-lugs-pa—can be considered to have their roots in this period.³ Collectively these schools are often referred to as the gSar-ma, or new schools.

3. Other significant schools of Tibetan Buddhism have been the bKa'-gdams-pa, Lam-'bras-pa, Shangs-pa (founded by the Siddha Khyung-po), Zhi-byed-pa (arising from Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas and incorporating the practice of gCod, as transmitted by his consort, Ma-gcig-lab-kyi-sgron-ma), sByor-drug-pa, and O-rgyan-bsnyen-sgrub-pa.

It was during this period of later transmission that the Kha-che Vinaya lineage was firmly established. During the initial spread of the Dharma, this lineage had been introduced in four significant transmissions, two in the central district of gTsang, and two in the central district of dBus. These lineages, however, did not remain strong. The lineage was reestablished through the Mahāpaṇḍita of Kashmir, Śākyaśrībhadra [Kha-che Paṇ-chen (1127–1225)], who received his Vinaya ordination and training in the lineage of several important teachers, including Śrī Dharmapāla and Zhang-zhung rGyal-ba'i-shes-rab. The latter was a disciple of Prajñāpāla, who was also a disciple of Śrī Dharmapāla in the lineage coming from Guṇamati, the disciple of Guṇaprabha.

When Kha-che Paṇ-chen arrived at bSam-yas monastery in 1204, already an old man, he discovered the Sanskrit text of the Guhyagarbha (gSang-ba'i-snying-po), which had been translated by Vimalamitra, gNyags Jñānakumāra, and rMa Rin-chen-mchog. From Śrījñāna, Kha-che Paṇ-chen received the Śrāmaṇerakārikā, and translated it into Tibetan. He then journeyed to Tho-ling Monastery, taking with him a very authoritative edition of the Śrāmaṇera-varṣāgrā-ṛcchā, a sort of expanded catechism for young monks. At Tho-ling, he translated this work while consulting the original edition belonging to Dharmapāla. After spending ten very active years in Tibet, he returned to Kashmir in 1214.

The Kha-che lineage further spread through the efforts of three disciples of Kha-che Paṇ-chen. These were dPal Lo-tsā-ba Chos-kyi-bzang-po and Chag dGra-bcom, both of whom were ordained by Kha-che Paṇ-chen, and Khro-phu Lo-tsā-ba Byams-pa-dpal, who had invited Kha-che Paṇ-chen to Tibet and had acted as his interpreter. When the great paṇḍita returned to Kashmir, Khro-phu escorted him as far as mNga'-ris. The Mahāpaṇḍita, upon leaving Tibet, gave Khro-phu Lo-tsā-ba gold to continue his translation work.

Among the significant texts for the Vinaya lineage of this period were the Bhikṣuvarṣāgrāṛcchā (dGe-slong-gi-dang-po'i-lo-dri-ba), translated by Atīśa, the Bhikṣukārikā (Vinayakārikā), an important Nepalese text translated by the monk Prajñākīrti and his assistant Jayākara, and the Śrāmaṇera Śikṣāpada-sūtra (dGe-tshul-bslab-pa'i-gzhi'i-mdo), which was translated by the monk gZhon-nu-mchog at Tho-ling Monastery.

Other noteworthy Vinayadharas were Shangs-pa Jo-stan and Seng-ge-zil-gnon, who wrote commentaries on the kārikās given to them by Kha-che Paṇ-chen. Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1252),



Lo-chen Dharmasri

the fourth Sa-skya master, received this lineage, as did a few masters of the Karma-pa line. The great scholar Bu-ston received the lineage from his teacher bSod-nams-mgon-po, who was the chief disciple of Seng-ge-zil-gnon. rJe Rin-po-che (Tsong-kha-pa) also inherited this lineage when he received ordination from the Abbot Blo-gsal-ba.

The sMad Lineage continued to be strong up to and through the time of the blossoming of the gSar-ma traditions. Lo-chen Dharmasri practiced and spread the teachings of the sMad, and these continued to be followed in the rNying-ma monastic college of sMin-grol-gling, which was founded and also attended by Lo-chen Dharmasri's brother, the great scholar and contemplative O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa. Both brothers, under the patronage of the fifth Dalai Lama, were highly instrumental in the preservation of the Vinaya, Sūtra, and bKa'-ma in this area of

Tibet. However, for the rNying-ma sMad Vinaya lineage, Lo-chen Dharmasrī is the most significant propagator.

The rNying-ma Vinaya tradition reached great heights in the eighteenth century with the monastic reformer rDzogs-chen rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas (b. 1800). An abbot of rDzogs-chen monastery, his works include the Phung-po-rab-dbye-bcos-kyi-mkhas-bya'i-gnas-drug. gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas stressed the importance of strict observance of the Vinaya rules, while at the same time carrying on the highest inner teachings. He and his lineage of disciples became closely aligned with dGe-mang, a retreat in the rDza-chu-kha area belonging to rDzogs-chen monastery. The reforms he established there spread throughout Khams.

The rNying-ma Lama mKhan-po Ngag-dga' (mKhan-po Ngag-dbang-dpal-bzang, 1879–1941) carried on the dGe-mang movement, which involved the development of the principles of monastic discipline and solid scholasticism into a strong theory of social commitment for the monk, beyond the performance of special rituals or ceremonies. These developments were cut short with the political upheavals of the 1950's, but perhaps they can continue to unfold in Tibet and elsewhere in the decades to come.

The Abhidharma Tradition in Tibet

The Abhidharma tradition has been a vital factor in the unfolding of Tibetan Buddhism throughout its history. Most of the primary works of the Abhidharma were translated into Tibetan between about 790 and 840 C.E., during the reign of Kings Khri-srong-lde-btsan and Ral-pa-can. The seven fundamental treatises of Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma were translated by Jinamitra, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, and others, but most of these translations were subsequently lost. Only the Prajñapti-śāstra (gDags-pa'i-bstan-bcos) of Maudgalyāyana, which was translated by Jinamitra and sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, remains partially extant in Tibetan.

The Mahāvibhāṣā, now extant only in its Chinese version, was apparently translated into Tibetan during this early period as well. The text is listed in an index that sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs and Cog-ro Klu'i rgyal-mtshan compiled, and it is quoted by many later lamas such as Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa, but in later years it seems to have been lost.

Among the first Abhidharma texts to be translated were Asaṅga's Abhidharma-samuccaya, known as the 'Higher Exposition', and the

Abhidharma-koṣa of Vasubandhu, known as the 'Lower Exposition', together with its commentary. Jinamitra, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, and Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan translated and taught each of these works.

The Abhidharma lineage in Tibet branched out through three disciples of the early Abhidharma lineage holders: sNa-nam Zla-ba'i-rdo-rje, lHa-lung dPal-gyi-rdo-rje, and dBas Ye-shes-rgyal. dBas Ye-shes-rgyal was invited to go to Khams, where he taught Grub-rgyal-ba'i-ye-shes, from whom the lineage spread throughout dBus and gTsang.

Among dBas Ye-shes-rgyal's other disciples were Gru-mchog-gi-ye-shes and Rwa Khri-bzang-'bar. The latter passed the teachings to Brang-ti-dar-ma, who taught the Abhidharmasamuccaya to Rog Chos-kyi-brtson-'grus, who in turn spread these teachings throughout central Tibet. He had many disciples, one of whom wrote a large commentary on the Abhidharmasamuccaya. This lineage was passed to Kun-mkhyen Dharmākara and 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba (1392–1481). Later the Abhidharmasamuccaya was emphasized more strongly than the Abhidharma-koṣa; however, the Koṣa lineage continued as a vital source of Abhidharma teachings. Numerous Tibetan commentaries were composed on the Koṣa, including the mDzod-'grel-mngon-pa'i-rgyan, by mChims 'Jam-dbyangs from sNar-thang monastery.

Important Tibetan commentaries written on the Samuccaya include the Chos-mngon-pa-kun-las-btus-pa'i-rnam-bshad-nyi-ma'i-'od-zer by Bu-ston and the rNam-pa-bshad-legs-par-bshad-pa'i-chos-mngon-rgya-mtsho'i-snying-po by rGyal-tshab. The great rNying-ma teacher Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912) also wrote a commentary, the mNgon-pa-kun-btus-kyi-rnam-grangs-sna-tshogs-bshad-pa-ldeb.

From Ye-shes-sde the transmission went to Nāgadhvaja. After Bu-ston's time (14th century), it continued without interruption to Chos-kyi-dpal-ba, Tsong-kha-pa, and others.

At the time of Ye-shes-'od, early in the eleventh century, two paṇḍitas, Smṛtijñāna (a disciple of Nāropa) and Sūkṣmadīrgha, were invited to Tibet by the Nepali master Padmaruci. Their translator died on the journey, leaving them to make their way alone in Tibet. As a result, Smṛtijñāna became a shepherd in Ta-nag. Subsequently, he was discovered by bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, who invited him to Man-lung and became his student. Smṛtijñāna then went to Khams, where he established a school for the study of the Abhidharma. Having learned Tibetan, he translated his own works, including the Catuḥpīṭha-ṭikā. He

then went to Li-chu-gser-khab, where he composed the *Vācanamukha*. While in Khams, *Smṛtijñāna* wrote a commentary on the *Abhidharma-koṣa*. Many disciples gathered round him, establishing a strong tradition of the 'Lower Exposition'.

gYas-chen-po Shes-rab-grags, along with several others who followed this lineage, spread these teachings throughout the provinces of dBus, gTsang, and Khams. Brang-ti Dar-ma-snying-po, who was instructed to teach both 'Higher' and 'Lower' Expositions, was a key figure in the wide propagation of the teachings. Also important were Brang-ti's disciple Rog Chos-kyi-brtson-'grus and Ko-bo Ye-shes-byung-gnas, whose disciple was 'Phan dKon-mchog-rdo-rje. His disciple in turn was Tho Gar-nam-lde, also known as Tho Kun-dga'-rdo-rje. This lineage was then carried on by mChims brTson-seng, who composed the first Tibetan *ṭīkā* on the text, and then by mChims Nam-mkha'-grags and bSam-gtan-bzang-po. It was passed on to bCom-ldan-rig-ral, who obtained funds from the ruler of the Yüan Dynasty for the purpose of compiling a canonical collection which was stored at sNar-thang. It was this collection upon which Bu-ston based his history of Buddhism (*Chos-byung*). Red-mdä'-ba also helped to maintain the lineage. These scholars composed *ṭīkā*s on the commentaries and distributed them widely.

These lineages of the Abhidharma tradition have been both a foundation and a blossoming for the philosophical developments of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The Abhidharma teachings are studied and practiced to this day as a primary source for understanding one's mind and experience as a basis for liberation.

Transmission of Prajñāpāramitā in Tibet

The ideas of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Phar-phyin) were formally introduced into Tibet by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla (c. 750). In India at this time, the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* were receiving the highest acclaim, especially through the efforts of King Dharmapāla, who propagated the Dharma so extensively that there were thirty-five centers for the study of *Prajñāpāramitā* alone. As King Dharmapāla and Khri-srong-lde-btsan were contemporaries, the spread of the *Prajñāpāramitā* was also highly successful in Tibet.

Under the sponsorship of Dharmapāla, Haribhadra (Seng-ge-bzang-po) wrote two famous commentaries on the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, the *Sputārtha* and the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, as well as numerous other

commentaries. This great master had listened to the exposition of Madhyamaka works by Ācārya Śāntarakṣita and had received teachings from Vairocana-bhadra on the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra as well as the Abhisamayālaṅkāra-śāstra-upadeśa. He was also a great scholar in the Abhidharma. In Tibet, Haribhadra is regarded as the principal source for the interpretation of the Abhisamayālaṅkāra, the basic text on the Prajñāpāramitā. This text is essentially an elucidation of the various meanings of pāramitā as both the source and the goal of the Buddhist path.

The spread of the Prajñāpāramitā lineage in Tibet occurred during two distinctive periods. The earlier period began with Rlangs Khams-pa, who went to India and returned with the One Hundred Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, which he then translated. Kamalaśīla, a renowned commentator on the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, assisted the Tibetan king Khri-srong-lde-btsan with oral explanations of the translated texts that the king had received. The king, because of his great devotion to the Mahāyāna, wrote the text down in a mixture of goat's milk and his own blood. This was known as the 'Red Notes' (Reg-zegs-dmar-po), and was placed in a Stūpa at Lhasa.

The scholars dBas Mañjuśrī and Nyang Indravaro also went to India, returning with numerous original manuscripts and texts. A spiritual son of the king wrote these down in a mixture of goat's milk, lapis lazuli, and other precious minerals. These were known as the 'Blue Notes' (Reg-zegs-sngon-po). A few sections of these works were found to be incomplete, so Vairotsana edited them, completed the missing sections, and wrote them out in his own hand. They were later catalogued and placed in mChims-phu Monastery, where they remained for many centuries.

The principal period of translation of Prajñāpāramitā texts occurred between the years 790 and 840. The Tibetan scholar Ye-shes-sde, the Indian paṇḍitas Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, and Śīlendrābodhi, along with two disciples of Padmasambhava, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs and Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan translated some sixteen different Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras and issued corrections on the texts. The commentary of Daṁṣṭrasena was also translated at this time.

During this early period of extensive translation, both the lineages of experience and of explanation in the Prajñāpāramitā increased with great vigor in Tibet, having been stimulated by the many cross-currents between India and Tibet. Nālandā and other great monastic universities were flourishing, and many of the Buddhist doctrines expounded at Nālandā were establishing new roots in various parts of the Pāla Empire.



Ye-sbes-sde

The scholars of this period preserved the living heritage of the texts by fostering an oral transmission of the teachings that traced back to such masters as Haribhadra and Vimuktasena.

During the eclipse of Buddhism in Tibet from around 840 to 950, when Buddhism was undergoing persecution in the central provinces by the usurper Glang Dar-ma, the Sangha was forced to go underground or flee to the remote regions. Following this period, the Mahāpaṇḍita Rin-chen-bzang-po (958–1055) initiated what is known as the later spread of the Dharma (phyi-dar), and the doctrines of the Prajñāpāramitā again blossomed. Rin-chen-bzang-po himself studied the Abhisamayālaṅkāra in India, together with its multitude of commentaries. He was assisted in these studies by the Paṇḍita Guṇamitra, who had studied with Buddhajñāna, a disciple of Haribhadra.

A prominent master of this period was Atīśa, whose numerous Prajñāpāramitā teachers included Jñānaśrīmati and the younger Kusali. Atīśa worked on many translations of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras with his students, including Khu-chen lHa-ldings-pa and 'Brom-ston rGyal-ba. Atīśa and Rin-chen-bzang-po translated the rTogs-dka'-snang-ba, a commentary by Dharmakīrti on the Abhisamayālaṅkāra and other texts. Atīśa handed down the tradition of the Lineage of Explanation that became known as the Khams method.

rNgog Lo-tsā-ba Blo-ldan-shes-rab, who lived after the time of Rin-chen-bzang-po, having heard the teachings of Paṇḍita bsTan-bskyong on the Prajñāpāramitā, went to Nepal and revised the terms for samādhi in the One Hundred Thousand Line Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra at the monastic library of Pham-thing. He also revised and retranslated the Abhisamayālaṅkāra and its commentaries. In so doing, he finalized their internal meanings and widely propagated the Lineage of Explanation.

The Oral Transmission lineage then continued with the teacher 'Bre Shes-rab-'bar, who assembled the lineage of the four elder disciples of rNgog Lo-tsā-ba, as well as the lineages of Atīśa, Rin-chen-bzang-po, and rNgog himself. These he united with the Khams lineage from the period of the early spread of the Doctrine. The lineage of teachings was continued by the numerous disciples of 'Bre, but in particular by Byang-chub-ye-shes of Ar, who taught until a very old age at gNam-rtse-ldan (near Rwa-sgrengs), mChims-phu, and various other monasteries. During his later years, he composed many expositions on the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras and their commentaries and on the Abhisamayālaṅkāra as well.

The traditional Tibetan interpretation of the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras has been said to be based mainly on the exegeses of 'Bre and Ar. The prominent lama gZhon-nu-tshul-khrims (known also as sKar-chung-ring-mo), who studied under Ar, wrote numerous works on the Abhisamayālaṅkāra and its commentaries. Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub and 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal, author of the Blue Annals, were in this lineage. Bu-ston's closest disciple, Lo-tsā-ba Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal, taught gYag Mi-pham Chos-kyi-bla-ma, who wrote explications of the large, medium, and short Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras. Through his teaching, the Prajñāpāramitā lineage was brought to gYag, which is located in the rMa-chen-spom-ra area of A-mdo. His chief disciple was Rong-ston-chen-po Shes-bya-kun-gzigs (1367–1449), a Sa-skyā lama. These lineages continued into this century and were spread widely. The other important lineage for the Prajñāpāramitā extends from Phya-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge

(d. 1169), who had studied with the disciple of rNgog Lo-tṣā-ba, Gro-lung-pa Blo-gros-'byung-gnas.

The Prajñāpāramitā tradition in Tibet has produced numerous texts explaining difficult points contained in the Sūtras from the point of view of practical application. The Abhisamayālaṅkāra was the fundamental text for this tradition. There were at least ten different schools of Prajñāpāramitā, each with its own manuals (yig-cha) for study. Traditionally, the Prajñāpāramitā was the second branch of learning to be studied and learned by heart.⁴

The Mādhyamika Tradition in Tibet

Throughout the history of Buddhism, there has been a tradition of critical analysis, with each school challenging the standpoint of the others in order to arrive at the highest and purest of the Buddha's teachings. In Tibetan Buddhism, the two most influential schools have been the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika and the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika. Most Tibetans favor the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika line, but the Svātantrika line is also highly respected, and many masters of both India and Tibet have been greatly influenced by the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika. The basic text for this latter tradition is the Madhyamakālaṅkāra (dBu-ma-rgyan) of Śāntarakṣita, while the works of Candrakīrti and Śāntideva are among those most important for the Prāsaṅgikas. Each of the four major schools in Tibet explicate their tenets from their own standpoint.

In the early period of translation of Buddhist texts into Tibet in the eighth century, when Śāntarakṣita himself made the difficult journey to the Land of Snow, several Svātantrika texts were translated, including works by Śāntarakṣita himself. This great master was born about 700 C.E. to a royal family in Za-hor (Bengal), in the small village of Sabhar. He became one of the most renowned scholars at Nālandā University. Although he is considered a Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamikan, he was

4. The traditional order for the study of Buddhist philosophy in Tibet in at least some schools was logic and general topics (tshad-ma and bsdus-grwa), lasting five to six years; Prajñāpāramitā (Sher-phyin), lasting four years; Mādhyamika (dBu-ma), lasting two years; and Vinaya ('Dul-ba), lasting ten years. In practice, it seems that these subjects were taught for significantly shorter periods of time (typically six months to a year) and then repeated at a later time, allowing the student to raise his level of understanding with repeated exposure.

interested in preserving all aspects of the Dharma, and his efforts in firmly establishing all the important lineages were extremely fruitful.

Among Śāntarakṣita's key works are the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, mentioned above, which clearly analyzes existents through a subtle logic of experience and proves by the use of syllogism that all particular dharmas have no actuality or essence, but are like reflections in a mirror, like a presence devoid of any 'thingness'. Another major literary contribution is the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, a logical refutation of the philosophical systems and conceptions current in India at the time. This work, composed before he went to Tibet, proceeds from the *Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika* viewpoint. Other works include the *Vipaṅcitārtha* (on the *Vādanyāya*), the *Vṛtti* on the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, the *Vajravidāraṇī-nāma-dhāraṇī-ṭikā*, the *Sarvatathāgata-pūrva-praṇidhāna-viśeṣa-vistara-sūtrāntopadeśa*, the *Saptatathāgata-pūrva-praṇidhāna-viśeṣa-vistara-kalpava-canavidhi*, the *Saptatathāgata-pūrva-praṇidhāna-viśeṣa-vistara-sūtrānta-vacana*, *Vajradharasaṃgīta-bhagavata-stotra-ṭikā*, *Hevajrodbhava-kurukullāyaḥ-pañca-mahopadeśa*, and the *Aṣṭa-tathāgata-stotra*.

In addition to the works of Śāntarakṣita, the early translators such as Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan and Paṅḍita Jñānagarbha translated other works common to both the *Mādhyamika* schools, including those of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, as well as *Svātantrika* texts of Kamalaśīla and Bhāvaviveka. However, at that time the division between *Svātantrika* and *Prāsaṅgika* had not been specifically introduced into Tibet. Ye-shes-sde, in his *ITa-ba-khyad-par*, divided the *Mādhyamika* into the *Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika* (linked to *Bhāvaviveka*) and the *Yogācāra-Mādhyamika*. The great eleventh-century rNying-ma master of *Mādhyamika* and rDzogs-chen, Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po, was one of the few early masters who understood the distinction among the *Mādhyamika* of *Svātantrika* and *Prāsaṅgika*. The Tibetan terms for these two schools (*Rang-rgyud-pa* for *Svātantrika* and *Thal-'gyur-pa* for *Prāsaṅgika*) only come into general use about the time of Bu-ston, in the fourteenth century.

During the eleventh century, rNgog Lo-tsā-ba (1008–1064) studied with the Kashmiri teacher Sajjana, who taught him the *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra*, the two *Vibhaṅgas*, and *Uttaratantra* (*rGyud-bla-ma*) of Maitreya. Sajjana himself helped translate into Tibetan the *Uttaratantra* and *Uttaratantra-vyākhyā*. Through rNgog, who also studied the *Prajñā-pradīpa* of Bhāvaviveka, the *Svātantrika* became widespread, with the lineage centering at gSang-phu Monastery south of Lhasa. His student, Grwa-pa mNgon-shes, taught bTsan Kha-bo-che (b. 1021) the *Uttara-*

tantra and other works. Cang-ra-pa and others continued this teaching, which accepted the view of a consciousness beyond duality, non-referential and self-illuminating, as the impetus for Buddhahood. This insight is the source of the so-called Great Mādhyamika, dBu-ma-chen-po, said to be a teaching of definitive meaning. Among the teachers who advance this lineage are gTsang-nag-pa, Padmasambhava, Klong-chen-pa, Jo-nang Dol-po Shes-rab-rgyal-mtshan (1292–1361), sMin-grol-gling Lo-chen Dharmaśrī (1654–1717) and the latter's brother, the great master gTer-bdag-gling-pa (1646–1714).

The fifth abbot at gSang-phu had eight students who were known as the 'Eight Great Lions'. Two followed the Prāsaṅgika line of Candrakīrti, while the rest followed the Svātantrika-Yogācāra-Mādhyamika approach of Kamalaśīla, the disciple of Śāntarakṣita. This latter approach, which was supported as well in many rNying-ma study centers, is still followed to this day, although it has not come down as a continuous line of explanation.

As for the Prāsaṅgika approach, it developed chiefly through Pa-tshab Lo-tsā-ba. From his primary disciples, known as the 'Four Sons of Pa-tshab', came many of the followers of Prāsaṅgika in Tibet. The lineage they established continues to the present day.

The rNying-ma lama Mi-pham 'Jam-byangs-rnam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912) studied Śāntarakṣita's Madhyamakālamkāra-śāstra and Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra with dPal-sprul Rinpoche. Lama Mipham extensively researched the different positions within Mādhyamika, and even studied at dGe-lugs-pa monasteries in order to learn the dGe-lugs-pa scholastic tradition of the Prāsaṅgika. Although he too followed the Prāsaṅgika, Lama Mi-pham differed from the dGe-lugs-pa interpretation. He set forth his differences in commentaries to the ninth chapter of the Bodhicaryāvatāra and the Madhayamakālamkāra. As he indicates in these works, the primary difference between the Yogācāra-Svātantrika and the Prāsaṅgika lay in the way they understood the Two Truths, the relative or conventional truth (kun-rdzob-bden-pa, saṃvṛti-satya) and the absolute truth (don-dam-bden-pa, paramārtha-satya). The Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas, in establishing the two truths as separate, accept the Yogācāra view of conventional reality, as well as the Mādhyamika view of absolute reality.

According to Mi-pham, the Svātantrika initially set up the distinction between the two truths, using the point of view of the ultimate truth, in order to be able to better examine relative truth. In their use of a syllo-

gistic logic, they leave an anchor in the field of conventional thought, using this connection to show that all entities of reality are devoid of an essence.

The Yogācāra Svātantrikas distinguish two kinds of ultimate truth—an ultimate reality that cannot be expressed in words (rnam-grangs-min-pa'i-don-dam, the realization of the meditative experience) and an ultimate reality that can be expressed (rnam-grangs-pa'i-don-dam, which comes in the post-meditative phase). The Prāsaṅgika do not accept this distinction, instead emphasizing the indivisibility (zung-'jug) of the Two Truths and looking at the ultimate truth from the viewpoint of the goal rather than the path.

According to Lama Mi-pham, Śāntarakṣita's Madhymakālamkāra contains the Prāsaṅgika view from within the meditative experience, but approaches this view from a logic showing the separation of the Two Truths. Śāntarakṣita emphasizes the emptiness of all things, thus refuting the contention that entities exist in truth. This is a first step toward the śūnyatā experience of meditation, which cannot be talked about.

The Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika position held by Śāntarakṣita serves as a bridge which crosses over to the Prāsaṅgika. In order to completely understand the Prāsaṅgika approach, one must enter by way of the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika standpoint, which allows one to utilize the conventional framework in order to experience the ultimate. In his works, Lama Mi-pham points out that the intent of the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika are the same; it is just their emphasis that differs. Both these traditions have long and extensive lineages which continue to the present day.



Vajrasattva

The Vajrayāna Lineages in Tibet

The Spiritual Courses of the Buddhist Tradition

The Buddha observed that the various ways or methods of enlightenment can be divided and subdivided endlessly. It is a habitual function of the mind to make distinctions and divisions and to create doctrines and more doctrines. This has a practical purpose, for individuals with different frames of reference need different spiritual courses or vehicles (yānas) that are appropriate to them.

In early times, during or shortly after the time of the Buddha, enlightenment could often be obtained simply by listening to the words (bKa'-ma, Āgama) of the Buddha or other accomplished masters, thinking or reflecting on what had been heard, and making it a lived experience. Those who took this course, apart from the Enlightened Ones, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats, were considered to fall into four classes: monks (dge-slong, bhikṣu), nuns (dge-slong-ma, bhikṣuṇī), laymen (dge-bsnyen, upāsaka), and laywomen (dge-bsnyen-ma, upāsikā). The latter, while retaining their secular occupations, honored the Vinaya code of ethics; in particular they renounced the five cardinal transgressions of killing, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication. Gradually a further distinction was made, allowing for the category of novice monks (dge-tshul, śrāmaṇera) and novice nuns (dge-tshul-ma, śrāmaṇerikā). A final distinction was made for those who took monastic vows temporarily, for a prescribed period of time.

In the course of time, as the ways of the world became more complex and the inclination toward rampant materialism increased, giving rise to more distractions and allurements, the path toward realization became more difficult. This led to the need for practicing the more esoteric or internal teachings of the Buddha.

Gradually, the teachings were classified in different ways, indicating different stages of development along the spiritual path. The most basic division of the graded teachings of the Buddhas are referred to as the Three Yānas: Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Bodhisattvayāna. Westerners sometimes speak of the Three Vehicles as Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, but this approach is misleading, for the Vajrayāna is a form of Mahāyāna and cannot be separated from it.

The Three Yānas The Śrāvakas, or Faithful Listeners, have been indispensable in the preservation and propagation of the teachings. The Śrāvaka is one who hears, understands, and communicates to others the teachings of the Buddha. He or she seeks purification (viśuddhi) through the Three Trainings of ethics and morality (śīla), meditative development (samādhi), and appreciative discrimination (prajñā).

The Pratyekabuddhas, or self-enlightened Buddhas, pursue the path without a teacher, and in fact do not appear in the time of a Buddha. The Pratyekabuddha may attain realization without ever hearing the teachings of the Tathāgatas. Having achieved insight, Pratyekabuddhas do not verbally communicate this understanding to others. They are living examples of how to pursue the path in complete independence.

The paths of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha emphasize analytical methods of meditation as a means for putting an end to desire, confusion, and hatred and attaining liberation from suffering. In certain key respects, they can be said to retain an individualistic orientation. Accepting only the teachings of the First Turning, the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha can also be understood as revealing a way of practice related to specific stages in an individual's growth.

The Bodhisattvayāna is sometimes equated with the Mahāyāna, for the latter rests on the practice of the Bodhisattva, one whose primary concern is for the welfare of others. Compassion is the principal quality of the Bodhisattva, who has accepted responsibility for leading all beings out of the recurring cycle of frustration known as samsara. The Bodhisattva proceeds through the Pāramitāyāna, practicing the six pāramitās and in this way progressing through ten spiritual levels (sa, bhūmi) by means of the five paths (lam, mārga).

The highest path of the Mahāyāna is the Vajrayāna. Specifically concerned with the practice of yoga, the Vajrayāna can be regarded as the most practical approach toward the union of appropriate action (thabs, upāya) and appreciative discrimination (shes-rab, prajñā). Essentially

inseparable from the Mantrayāna, the Vajrayāna can be seen as an extension of the Pāramitāyāna, differing in that it utilizes a more hidden or secret approach toward spiritual transformation.

The great rNying-ma lama Jigs-med-gling-pa explained that in the Vajrayāna the Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna are fused in a union of cause and effect. The language and approach of the Pāramitāyāna can be understood as more 'categorizing', involving faculties of judgment, while that of the Mantrayāna is more 'embodying', involving feelings and lived experience. Thus, the teachings of the Mantrayāna favor an intimate approach to all experience that is appropriate only for certain types of people.

As its name reveals, the Mantrayāna involves the use of mantra, which is an outgrowth of dhāraṇī, as well as the maṇḍala, which works with the faculty of vision. In its practical application, the mantra may be thought of as the 'protection of the mind', and its use aims at purification and the burning away of accumulated karma. The deep meditative realizations of the Inner Mantrayāna are derived not only from the Sūtras presented by the historical Buddha, but also from the Dharmakāya, the originating field of all Buddhas. Thus, the Ādibuddha, portrayed variously as Vajrasattva, Vairocana, or Samantabhadra, is the central figure of the Vajrayāna, uniting the inexpressible Dharmakāya with the articulated Rūpakāya, consisting of Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya.

The Vajrayāna emerged as a direct response by enlightened and compassionate masters to the needs of the Sangha as both the internal and external obstacles to spiritual growth became more pronounced. Innumerable precepts and instructions, vast as the sky, were made available in the human sphere (though only a fraction of these were taken to the world that we are familiar with; the majority were taken to other world systems).

It is through the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi that the Tantras, the practices and texts of the Vajrayāna, are disseminated in the human realm. Tantra refers primarily to the process of growth initiated in the Vajrayāna (don-gyi-rgyud); secondarily it refers to the body of literature that deals with this self-generating developmental process (tshig-gi-gyud).

In the rNying-ma school, the Tantras are divided into outer and inner (phyi-rgyud and nang-rgyud). The outer Tantras are practiced by all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, both rNying-ma-pa and gSar-ma-pa. The Inner Tantras, referred to more precisely as the three Perfectly Internal

Tantras (nang-rgyud-sde-gsum) are the essence of rNying-ma teachings, and are practiced by the rNying-ma-pa alone.

The Nine Yānas The rNying-ma school organizes the teachings of the Tathāgatas into nine Yānas. The first three—Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha, and Bodhisattva—originate with the Nirmāṇakāya transmission stemming from Śākyamuni Buddha and his disciples. Because of their leading roles through the history of Buddhism, those who follow these three traditions have been called the offspring of the Buddhas. The second three Yānas are those of the three Outer Tantras—Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga. They originate with Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, and Avalokiteśvara, and they constitute a Sambhogakāya transmission. The last three Yānas are those of the Inner Tantras—Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. They find their origin in the Dharmakāya with the Ādibuddha Kun-tu-bzang-po.

While the Mahāyāna tradition recognizes ten bhūmi or levels of Bodhisattva development, the rNying-ma system presents sixteen bhūmi. The completion of the Pāramitāyāna represents the tenth bhūmi, while the eleventh, which is known as lam-rgyud, consists of the Mantrayāna practices and realizations leading to direct enlightenment as set forth in the Anuttarayoga-tantra. The twelfth stage is realized with the practice of the Mahāyoga, the thirteenth in the Anuyoga, and the fourteenth through sixteenth in the Sems-sde, Klong-sde, and Man-ngag-sde divisions of Atiyoga or rDzogs-chen.

The process of spiritual maturation that occurs as one progresses through the nine Yānas can also be subsumed under four heads: gzhi-rgyud, lam-rgyud, 'bras-bu-rgyud, and thabs-rgyud. gZhi-rgyud refers to the foundation in absolute being, symbolized by the Ādibuddha Kun-tu-bzang-po, absolutely pure from a beginning that is beginningless (gdod-ma'i-ka-dag-chen-po), and is 'prior' to the split into samsara and nirvana. The term 'gzhi' also refers to the view (lta-ba), and in this sense consists of three factors: facticity (ngo-bo), nature (rang-bzhin), and compassion (thugs-rje). gZhi-rgyud is also inherently the unoriginated womb or heart (snying-po, garbha), a potentiality that cannot be obscured by incidental stains (nyon-mongs, kleśa).

The second aspect, lam-rgyud, refers to what purifies nyon-mongs through actions that accumulate merit (puṇyasambhāra) and knowledge (jñānasambhāra). Such actions of body, speech, and mind serve as antidotes to the tendency toward wishful thinking and emotionality, as well as mistaken views regarding the nature of the knowable. More generally,

lam-rgyud refers to the entire body of the Mahāyāna tradition, including the philosophical tenets of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools, and the deeply religious practices of the Mantrayāna.

The third aspect, 'bras-bu-rgyud, refers to the eleventh stage of the path, when full enlightenment has been achieved. Finally, the fourth aspect, thabs-rgyud, indicates activity that is supremely focused, working for the benefit of others without preconceived ideas or notions. Such compassionate activity promotes the swift enlightenment of others by awakening them to knowledge as self-originated. It is the act of living in the world fully and completely. This is not inconsistent with imaginative activity, and indeed the process of visualization is closely linked to success in the practice of the Tantras. Thabs-rgyud also refers to the actions possessed by a person who has proved to be a responsible holder of the lineage, always ready to act to prevent Buddha-centered action from becoming imbued with the predispositions and biases that arise from a self-centered perspective.

Lineage The thread, link, or uninterrupted continuity of the living tradition and teachings, which have been handed down to the present day, constitute the lineage. Through this lineage, the various paths within the tradition remain dynamic and vital vehicles for spiritual growth.

The basis of the lineage is first the outer lineage of the teachings, which originated with the appearance in this world of the historical Buddha. The potential that this historical appearance manifested is the so-called inner lineage, the seed of enlightenment or Tathāgatagarbha that embraces or permeates all sentient beings as cream permeates fresh milk. The union of the inner and outer accounts for the continuity down through history of a long line of spiritual teachers, or living exemplars, who have recognized and actualized this Buddha nature and have transmitted or pointed it out to others who in turn have been able to discover in it their own innermost being.

The Outer Tantras The three outer Tantras, transmitted at Vārāṇasī, Ri-bo-rkyang-can, and Dur-khrad-me-ru-'bab, were carried to Tibet in both the first and second periods of transmission. During the early spread (snga-dar) of the Dharma in Tibet, the Kriyā and Caryā Tantras were propagated by the Ācārya Buddhaguhya. The tantras of these classes include the Ārya-Subāhupariṣcchā-nāma-tantra (dPung-bzangs), the Sarvamaṇḍalasāmānya-vidhīnām-guhyatantra (gSang-ba-spyi-rgyud), the Dhyānottaraṣaṭalakrama (bSam-gtan-phyi-ma), and their related commentaries. During the later transmission (phyi-dar) a vast number

of translations of the Kriyā, Caryā, and Yoga Tantras were instituted by Rin-chen-bzang-po and his successors. Although Chinese Buddhism was briefly exposed to the Inner Tantras as late as the time of Srong-btsan-gam-po (c. 600 C.E.) the tantric traditions that were preserved in China and are presently practiced in Japan are based primarily on these three divisions of the Outer Tantras.

The approach of the Outer Tantras may be summarized as follows:

Kriyātantra (Bya-ba'i-rgyud) emphasizes external conduct leading toward purification through the observance of ritual actions of body and speech. The divine power (lha) toward which ritual actions are directed is understood as the supreme essence of the Buddhas, the embodiment of pristine awareness (ye-shes), able to confer temporal benefits as a donor would confer benefits upon a beneficiary. In more psychological terms, the individual identifies himself or herself as the servant of a divine power, confident that such patterning of behavior will eventually lead to the direct realization of the source or origin of that power. Through practice it becomes increasingly clear that the supreme attainment is possible. The goal can be achieved over a period of sixteen human lifetimes.

Caryātantra (sPyod-pa'i-rgyud) places equal emphasis on external ritual purity and internal meditative development (sgom, bhāvanā). The basis for realization is the view of oneself as of equal status with the divine power, like a friend or brother or sister. Practice focuses on the creative visualization of the embodiment of the divine, so that belief in the separation between enlightened patterns of action and self-centered patterns of action gradually dissolves. The goal—being as Vajradhara (rDo-rje-'dzin-pa)—can be attained within a period of seven lifetimes.

The Yogatantra (rNal-'byor-pa'i-rgyud) consists of two parts, the outer and the inner. (The latter is also known as the unsurpassable spiritual course, or Anuttarayogatantra.) In the Outer Yoga Tantra (Upā-yoga), ritual purity and similar observances are only aids to realization: The primary focus is on inward contemplation founded in meditative stability, in order to perceive the functioning of the mind. The individual committed to service of the divine fuses with the divine itself as an embodiment of pristine awareness: Contemplation of this non-duality leads to realization. Such meditation on non-duality comes through dedicated practice of the Four Seals (phyag-rgya-bzhi): Mahāmudrā, Dharmamudrā, Samayamudrā, and Karmamudrā. The five skandhas, five senses, and five patterns of emotional reactivity are transformed into the

five Buddha qualities, representing the five kinds of pristine awareness or wisdom.

The Mahāmudrā Mahāmudrā (Phyag-rgya-chen-po) is an extension of those practices found in the Prajñāpāramitā that emphasize inner realization. In the Vajrayāna, the origins of Mahāmudrā are linked to the Samādhirāja-sūtra, which is said to elucidate the ultimate meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā. Such masters as Saraha, Nāropa, Advayavajra, and Mi-laras-pa were foremost masters of Mahāmudrā, which is closely aligned with the siddha tradition.

For Mahāmudrā, the highest realization is expressed as the unity of the 'vastness' of the Developing Stage and the 'profoundness' of the Fulfillment Stage. This realization is experienced as the most supreme form of pristine awareness. Through the integration of the Two Truths, the palace of rDo-rje-'chang, home of the absolute self-sameness of Being, is attained.

Anuttarayoga Anuttarayoga overlaps the two categories of Outer and Inner Tantras. One of the principal Anuttara texts, the Guhyasamāja, refers to the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha, which are considered hidden, or guhya, because they were not revealed to the assembly (samāja) of the Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and general followers of the Mahāyāna.

The Guhyasamāja was formally introduced to Tibet around the eleventh century, when Paṇḍita Smṛtijñāna extensively taught the lineage of explanation of Buddhajñānapāda in Khams and other localities in east Tibet. Thus, its history traces to Buddhajñāna, a student of Haribhadra who studied Prajñāpāramitā with this great master.

Having composed the Sañcaya-gāthā-pañjikā on the Prajñāpāramitā-sañcaya-gāthā, Buddhajñāna left for Uḍḍiyāna in search of teachings on the Mantrayāna. Greeted there by an assembly of Dākinīs, he studied the Kriyā and Yoga Tantras with Ācārya Līlavajra (sGeg-pa'i-rdo-rje), and received the Anuttarayogatantra and initiation from the Yoginī Gu-ne-ru.

In a dream, Buddhajñāna received instructions to go to the Northern Gate of Uḍḍiyāna to meet the Yoginī Mahā-Lakṣmī. He went there at once and studied with her for several months. He then proceeded to a forest near Jālandhara and studied the Yoga Tantras (Upāya-tantra) and related subjects for nine years with the Ācārya bSrung-ba'i-zhabs (Rakṣitapāda), a spiritual descendant of Nāgārjuna. After that he traveled to another forest to the north of Bodh Gayā, which was inhabited by



rDo-rje-'chang

many wild animals. Meditating upon this forest as the wilderness of saṁsāra, he resided there for six months. By the conclusion of his stay, he had gained insight into the essence of all the elements of existence (dharmatā).

Buddhajñāna then met 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen (Mañjuśrimitra), who recognized his accomplishment in spiritual practices. 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen—transforming himself in the maṇḍala of Manjughoṣa—asked Buddhajñāna whether he had greater confidence in the teacher or in the maṇḍala. When he replied that his confidence was in the maṇḍala, it vanished and 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen appeared. Buddhajñāna requested instructions from the teacher, who bestowed upon him the oral instruction (zhal-lung). At this, Buddhajñāna directly apprehended śūnyatā, and became possessed of immeasurable purity of mind. His teacher permit-

ted him to compose fourteen treatises on the Guhyasamāja, known as the Chos-bcu-bzhi.¹

Buddhajñāna trained eighteen outstanding disciples. Among them was Vitapāda (sMan-zhabs), author of an important commentary on the zhal-lung (Sukusuma-nāma-dvikrama-tattvabhāvanā-mukhā-gama-vṛtti). The learned masters Buddhaguhya and Sangs-rgyas-zhi-ba (Buddha-śānta), both immediate disciples of Buddhajñāna, were also direct lineage holders. Buddhajñāna spent his later years in Vajrāsana, where he built a temple.

The paṇḍita Śūnyaśrī and gNyan Lo-tśā-ba were also holders of this lineage. The translator gNyo-s'byung-po went to India to study the Guhyasamāja under Ācārya Balin, a spiritual son of 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen and Buddhajñāna's lineage and the spiritual preceptor of King Dharmapāla. From there, the transmission of the Guhyasamāja teachings and practices spread throughout east Tibet and the central provinces.

Other major Anuttara Tantras include the Cakrasaṁvara, the Hevajra, and the Kālacakra.

The Inner Tantras The Inner Tantras (nang-rgyud-sde-gsum) constitute the most secret oral transmission: the Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. They represent a further stage toward the 'inwardness' presented in the Anuttara-tantras.

The Mahāyoga may be related to the foundation or basis (gzhi, bhūmi), the Anuyoga to the path or method (lam, mārga), and the Atiyoga to the fruit or result ('bras-bu, phala).

The two principal types of transmission of these Inner Tantras as recognized by the rNying-ma-pa are the bKa'-ma and the gTer-ma. The

1. These fourteen works can be found in the bsTan-'gyur. The first three are known as the three Kun-tu-bzang-po: Kun-tu-bzang-po (Samantabhadra-nāma-sādhana), Kun-tu-bzang-mo (Caturaṅgasādhana-samantabhadrī-nāma), and Kun-tu-bzang-po'i-don-bsdus-pa (Śrī Herukasādhana). The others are as follows: sByin-bsreg-gnyis-kyi-cho-ga; gTor-ma-mi-nub-pa'i-sgron-ma; Tshogs-kyi-'khor-lo'i-cho-ga; Rin-po-che-'bar-pa, Śrī-Guhyasamājantrarāja-ṭikā-candra-prabhā-nāma (rGyud-kyi-rnam-bshad); dKyil-'khor-gyi-cho-ga-shlo-ka-bzhi-brgya-Inga-bcu-pa (Śrī-guhyasamāja-maṇḍalavidhināma); rTsa-ba'i-ye-shes-chen-po. Tshigs-su bcad-pa'i-mdzod; Muktitilaka-nāma (Grol-ba'i-thig-le zhes-bya-ba); Āmasādhana-avatāra-nāma; Byang-chub-sems-kyi-thig-le; dPal bkra-shis-kyi-rnam-par-bshad-pa-chen-po; bZhi-ba-la-'Jug-pa-thabs-dang-bcas-pa; and the Chu-sbyin-dbang-po'i-sgrub-pa'i-thabs-gsum (Bhaṭṭāraka-Ārya-jambhala-jalendra-sādhana, Guhya-jambhala-sādhana, and the Vistara-jambhala-sādhana).

bKa'-ma represents the continuous transmission of the teachings of the Buddha, unbounded by time or space. The gTer-ma represents the continuing transmission of particular texts, practices, and realizations which are rediscovered after having been concealed for a period of time.

bKa'-ma and gTer-ma share certain similarities. They both contain the precious body of internal teachings, particularly the highly experientially oriented Atiyoga transmissions, which enjoyed tremendous development and application in Tibet. Both bKa'-ma and gTer-ma are unique in that their existence does not depend upon the Vinaya or Mahāyāna lineages. Even if the entire body of doctrines and practices that constitute the Buddhadharma became non-existent, the transmission of the esoteric enlightenment principles could continue by way of the bKa'-ma and gTer-ma for the sake of the fortunate ones who sincerely wish to become enlightened.

The rNying-ma tradition recognizes a twofold division into the Transmission Tradition (rgyud-sde) and the Tradition of Meditative Realization (sgrub-sde). Related to these in turn are nine distinctive lineages that correspond to a unique cosmological framework. The first three of the nine, which are considered the major lineages, correspond to the three bKa'-ma transmissions of the rgyud-sde. They are as follows:

1. The lineage of Buddha intentionality (rGyal-ba-dgongs-brgyud), represented by the Ādibuddha Kun-tu-bzang-po, who resides in Akaniṣṭha Heaven and symbolizes the Dharmakāya.
2. The lineage of the Bearers of Pure Awareness (Rig-'dzin-brda-brgyud), which constitutes the teaching of the Atiyoga among human beings and the higher Bodhisattvas. This is a symbolic lineage that cannot be taught by means of ordinary language. Corresponding to the Sambhogakāya, it has both a human and a non-human transmission, with the human transmission beginning with dGa'-rab-rdo-rje and Śrī Sīmha.
3. The Lineage of the Oral Transmission, or Mouth to Ear Lineage (gang-zag-snyan-brgyud), which King Indrabodhi first received through the blessings of the 'Five Excellent Beings'. Vajrasattva is also linked to this lineage.

The six minor lineages are more practice-oriented:

4. The Dākinī Lineage (mkha'-'gro-gtad-rgya'i-brgyud-pa), in which the Dākinīs assist gTer-ma masters in uncovering and deciphering hidden texts.

5. The Bodhisattva Lineage (smon-lam-las-'phros-brgyud-pa), which emphasizes the altruistic aspirations of the Bodhisattvas.
6. Whispered Oral Teachings Lineage (shog-ser-tshigs-gi-brgyud-pa), in which highly guarded instructions are transmitted by the Dākinīs to their human disciples.
7. Visionary Lineage (dag-snang-gi-brgyud-pa), exemplified by the intense meditative visions 'Jigs-med-gling-pa had while he experienced the presence of Klong-chen-pa, or which 'Jam-dbyangsmkhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po had of Vimalamitra.
8. Recollection Lineage (rjes-dran-gi-brgyud-pa), which implements a sophisticated symbolic language formulated by siddhas.
9. gTer-ma Lineage (yang-gter-gi-brgyud-pa), the lineage of hidden treasure texts.

While the Transmission Tradition (rgyud-sde) is the more theoretical or philosophical aspect of the Inner Tantras, the Tradition of Meditative Realization (sgrub-sde) preserves the practical instructions for meditation and spiritual development. It contains the Eight Heruka Sādhanas of Padmasambhava, which became the foundation for the gTer-ma tradition, as well as the sNying-thig teachings summarized by Klong-chen-pa in his sNying-thig-ya-bzhi.

Characteristics of Inner Tantras

The three Inner Tantras have certain characteristics that set them apart. One characteristic of the Mahāyoga is that while Buddhist philosophy in general sets forth two truths, the conventional (kun-rdzob) and the ultimate (don-dam), the Mahāyoga sets forth what could be seen as a third truth. Relying on this third truth, it teaches how to make use of the emotions as vehicles to sustain and heighten awareness and bring about enlightenment in this very lifetime. Each situation can present its potentiality to be transformed into the deities of the meditative maṇḍala. Each of the deities is represented by specific sounds, colors, and images, manifesting the body, speech, and mind of the Nirmāṇakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Dharmakāya. Through the internal practice of sādhana, rituals, mudrās, and mantras, the mind itself becomes a mirror-like maṇḍala.

While Mahāyoga may be said to be concerned with visionary experience, the Anuyoga emphasizes the feeling tones of this vision. In Anuyoga teachings, all thought and form is directly experienced as having the nature of śūnyatā, and is identified with Kun-tu-bzang-mo, the

female aspect of the Dharmakāya. Appearance itself is identified with Kun-tu-bzang-po, the male aspect. The interpenetration of these two (zung-'jug)—from which derives all that manifests, wholly free from cause and effect—signifies their inseparability.

Atiyoga is an expression of a perfect harmony between appearance and openness (śūnya). It is complete in making the goal the path, dispensing with visualized images and with manipulation of internal focal points for energy. Concerned with direct realization of the intrinsic nature of mind, immaculately pure and free from beginningless time, it discovers all experience as perfectly reflected on the pure surface of mind, which is unoriginated and unoriginating. This self-existent pristine awareness, which recognizes the utter perfection of all experience, is the quintessence of the Vajrayāna.

Atiyoga, or rDzogs-chen, contains the most practical instructions, for it can be realized in any activity. It does not depend on the relative circumstances of time and the prospect of endless rebirths. Through Atiyoga, enlightenment can be achieved in a single lifetime, and it is the most fruitful of all Buddhist paths.

The term rDzogs-chen (rDzogs-pa-chen-po) means full, complete. The term dates back at least to around 500 C.E., when these ideas were already prominent in India and along the silk route to China. Later, Klong-chen-pa expanded its meaning to indicate that it refers to the all-complete or all-perfect doctrine.

The Atiyoga teachings appeared first in the area of Lake Dhanakosa in Uḍḍiyāna. These teachings are included within the sNying-thig-ya-bzhi and the guiding philosophical outlook is that of the Madhyamaka. The master Mañjuśrīmitra ('Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen) received the rDzogs-chen transmission from the first representative of the human-tradition, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, in a golden box. He then divided its six million four hundred thousand verses into three sections, known as the rDzogs-pa-chen-po sDe-gsum:

1. Mind Section (sems-sde), which relates to the firmness of mind (sems-gnas-rnams-la-sems-sde).
2. Section on the Unending Experience of Being (Klong-sde), which relates to effortlessness (bya-bral-rnams-la-klong-sde).
3. Guidance Section (Man-ngag-gi-sde), which relates to the vital essence (gnad-gtso-bo-la-man-ngag-sde). This section, encom-

passing the teachings of the sNying-thig, the most profound instructions in all the Dharma, is subdivided into two sections:

- a. The transmission of what is heard (snyan-brgyud), consisting of mouth to ear Tantra (rnar-rgyud) and explanatory Tantra (bshad-rgyud)
- b. The transmission of what is explained (bshad-rgyud)

It was Śrī Siṃha, the disciple of Mañjuśrīmitra, who journeyed to Vajrāsana and there uncovered the Guidance section of the rDzogs-chen teachings, which his teacher had hidden. He divided the section into four parts:

1. exoteric cycle (phyi-skor)
2. esoteric cycle (nang-skor)
3. secret cycle (gsang-skor)
4. most inner secret cycle (gsang-ba-bla-na-med-pa-skor)

The sNying-thig or Heart-Essence teachings are classified into two aspects. The first spiritual instructions came through Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava, and are called the Slob-dpon-chen-po-pad-ma'i-mKha'-'gro-snying-thig. The second originated with Vimalamitra and are known as the Bi-ma'i-snying-thig. In the fourteenth century Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa, one of the greatest of all rNying-ma masters, compiled and systematized these teachings, making them available for future generations.

The bKa'-ma Tradition

The bKa'-ma tradition is the continuous transmission of teachings, texts, practices, sādhanas, and realizations that have passed from teacher to student in an unbroken succession since the time of the Buddha. bKa' literally means the Buddha's Word. It is the Ādibuddha, Kun-tu-bzang-po (Samantabhadra), who teaches the bKa'-ma, which are essentially timeless and yet appear in all times and in all the ten directions.

The Ādibuddha radiates as a five-fold light emanating from the very meaningfulness of Being (chos-nyid) and is representative of a maṇḍala ever-present in all modes of space and time. This is the tradition of the Buddha-intentionality; the teachings derived from this transmission are represented by Kun-bzang Che-mchog Heruka. Through Che-mchog Heruka, the Ādibuddha entrusts the Buddha-word, or bKa'-ma, to the Vidyādhara of the intermediate sphere of the Sambhogakāya, Rig-'dzin



Kun-tu-bzang-po

rDo-rje-chos-rab, who in turn entrusts the bKa'-ma to the Ḍākinī (mKha'-gro-ma) Las-kyi-dbang-mo-che for safekeeping. This transmission also is given to Vajrasattva, who imparts it to the human tradition.

The bKa'-ma tradition may be subdivided into three sections, known as the mDo-sgyu-sems-gsum:

1. sGyu consists of the eighteen Tantric cycles of the Mahāyoga, with the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra as its root text.
2. mDo includes the Anuyoga practices and realizations and has five sections, each of which is related to one of the five Sūtras of the Anuyoga. Its root text is the 'Dus-pa'i-mdo.
3. Sems encompasses all three subdivisions of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-pa-chen-po), and deals with the Openness of Being.



rDo-rje-chos-rab

***The Transmission of the Atiyoga bKa'-ma
up to Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava²***

Vajrasattva (rDo-rje-sems-dpa') is the spiritual intermediary who transmitted the bKa'-ma, which originated in the Dharmakāya, to the first of the human tradition, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje. Being an emanation of the

2. The Deb-ther-sngon-po (*Blue Annals*) by 'Gos Lo-tśā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal (1392–1481) has been a valuable source for tracing the early rNying-ma lineages of transmission which are presented in the following sections. Also, the siddha O-rgyan-pa reported in his writings that he discovered a multitude of original early rNying-ma works and translations at the Bi-har-ri Monastery in Nepal. Many of these works are not in the bKa'-gyur or not apparently known to 'Gos Lo-tśā-ba.



Las-kyi-dbang-mo-che

Nirmāṇakāya (sprul-sku), dGa'-rab-rdo-rje was a Bearer of Pure Awareness (Rig-'dzin, Vidyādhara). On three occasions he had a vision of rDo-rje-sems-dpa', listened to his teachings, and fully understood their meaning. In bKra-shis-khri-gs-ngo in China, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje passed on the doctrine he had received to 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen, who in turn taught Śrī Śimha. Śrī Śimha instructed Vimalamitra in the cremation ground bSil-ba'i-tshal (Śītavana), and in bKra-shis-khri-gs-ngo instructed Jñānasūtra (Ye-shes-mdo), who imparted the transmission to Vimalamitra. Padmasambhava received the Oral transmission from 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen through 'Jam-dpal the Younger, as well as directly from dGa'-rab-rdo-rje in the form of meditative visions. This first Oral explanation lineage is called 'Transmission of that Doctrine which leads to the Final Goal of Atiyoga' (rDzogs-chen mthar-thug-gi-chos-kyi-brgyud-pa).



Vajrasattva

dGa'rab-rdo-rje dGa'rab-rdo-rje (b. 55 C.E.), was born in the country of Uḍḍiyāna, near Dhanakośa Lake. The rulers of that region were King Uparāja and Queen sNang-ba-gsal-ba'i-'od-ldan-ma, whose royal residence was a large temple called bDe-byed-brtsegs-pa, surrounded by one thousand six hundred and eight smaller temples. Their second daughter, Sudharmā, grew up to be a beautiful and virtuous young woman. She and her five hundred handmaidens, all of whom were virgins, renounced the worldly life and took full monastic vows. Then Sudharmā, together with her maids, retreated to an island where they meditated on the Yoga Tantra (rNal-'byor-gyi-rgyud).

In the year of the Wood-Female-Ox, shortly after dawn on the eighth lunar day of the first summer month, while taking a bath near the lake, Sudharmā had a wonderful meditative vision. In this vision she



dGa'-rab-rdo-rje

perceived a brilliant light coming from an easterly direction, emanating from the origin of all Buddhas. Out of this light emerged the sun and moon; the sun entered her body through the top of her head while the moon came into her body through her lower extremities.

Suddenly, Vajrapāṇi manifested before her as a beautiful Vajra-bird—a great swan of golden hue. The great bird descended upon the lake with four other swans, and together they showered themselves with the crystalline water. Then the four swans took flight, but the Vajra-bird remained.

Showing no sign of fear, he came up to Sudharmā and touched his beak to her heart cakra three times. As soon as he did this, a bright light appeared and dissolved into her body, and Sudharmā beheld the three-fold world as perfect and clear. The swan then took flight.

Sudharmā was astonished at what had happened but had no idea of the significance of the event. When she returned to her maids, she told them of the vision. When her father learned of the incident, he was both amazed and happy, because he felt that it must be a sign marking the birth of an enlightened master. The king then told his nobility to keep watch over her, insuring her safety.

Meanwhile, the princess' heart cakras transformed into a vajra gem and a vajra light came forth from her body and manifested as a beautiful infant. Because Sudharmā was a virgin, she was greatly disturbed, fearful that the whole kingdom would regard the child as a phantom. Her maids reminded Sudharmā of her visionary experience and told her that the baby must surely be a gift of the Enlightened Ones; nevertheless, she was full of shame and fear, and placed the child out of view in a dust heap. After three days she went out to look at the child, and found that his body was healthy and radiant. Thereupon, beautiful music filled the air, flowers came raining down from the heavens, and rainbow lights filled the skies.

Seeing this, the Bhikṣuṇī cast away all her doubts and fears, and, realizing the infant must be an incarnation (sprul-sku), she took him to her chambers and bathed him. Many Dākinīs appeared and gave offerings to this child who had come from the heavens. The infant possessed many signs of a great man: His right hand held a vajra, and his left, a walking stick embedded with precious gems. The Brahmin soothsayers predicted that the infant would be a great incarnated one who would put forth the most excellent of teachings.

Shortly after the child was born, Vajrapāṇi appeared to him and instantaneously initiated him into all the esoteric Tantras, which he grew up to comprehend perfectly. After this initiation, many Dharmapālas surrounded him, taking an oath that they would remain with him throughout his life. As he was an emanation of rDo-rje-sems-dpa', the Vidyādhara who is the holder of the knowledge of all Buddhas, the child was to become a great master of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen), endowed with the capacity for protecting the Dharma and instructing others in it with the utmost precision.

When he had reached the age of seven, he asked his mother several times for permission to dispute with the learned paṇḍitas, but each time she refused. One day soon after, King Uparāja had as guests five hundred paṇḍitas. Plagued by his constant entreaties, the princess finally consented to allow the child to talk with the paṇḍitas at the palace. The

youth stepped in front of the assembly and the debate began. Putting forth arguments from the viewpoint of the goal or final attainment ('bras-bu), he severely defeated all five hundred masters, who had all taken the viewpoint of the starting point (gzhi). After defeating them in every form of disputation, he began to instruct them on the subject matter of the Atiyoga, the All-complete Doctrine of the rDzogs-chen, which he had fully cognized since birth.

Astonished at this knowledge, the entire assembly of scholars surrounded the child and fell to their knees, referring to him as Prajna-bhadra, 'One of Great Awareness'. They all agreed that he was the incarnation of a great teacher.

The king was so pleased with the boy and experienced such extraordinary joy in his presence that he named him dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, 'Joyous Vajra'. Because his mother had once thrown him in the dust heap, he was also known as Ro-langs-bde-ba, 'Risen Joyously from the Dust'.

Later, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje journeyed north to mountain ranges and solitudes where pretas appeared in hordes. There, on a mountain called 'Where the Sun Rises', he lived and meditated for thirty-two years. During this time, rDo-rje-sems-dpa' appeared to him enveloped in a brilliant light. Initiating him as a perfectly endowed sprul-sku (Tulku), he bestowed on him both the texts and complete oral instructions of the six million four hundred thousand rDzogs-chen verses.

At one time when he was living in the mountain ranges, the earth trembled seven times. A non-Buddhist priest accused dGa'-rab-rdo-rje of causing the quakes by "injuring the belief of the Brahmins." The Brahmin king of the region then proceeded to charge dGa'-rab-rdo-rje with committing a crime, and neighboring herdsmen joined the king's vassals in search of him. When they arrived at his meditation cave they heard a deep and powerful sound coming from its entrance; he appeared before them in rays of light and no one could lay hands on him. Because of this, the king and his entire entourage were converted to the Buddhadharmā.

dGa'-rab-rdo-rje was endowed with numerous unusual powers, such as the ability to walk unhindered through rocks, stone, and swift running water. He appeared before many people enveloped in light, inspiring them with great faith and devotion. dGa'-rab-rdo-rje attracted a great number of disciples, and many of these received special empowerments (dbang-bskur).

Accompanied by a spiritual daughter of Rāhula who was psychically endowed, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje proceeded to a cemetery near the grove at Śītavana (bSil-ba'i-tshal) in Magadha, on the central plains of India. There he delivered the instantaneous transmission, which transforms the mind of the student into that of the teacher, to numerous Dākinīs who assumed the form of both humans and apparitions. To all these disciples he uttered the teachings of the rDzogs-chen rDo-rje-sems-dpa', explaining its subtle meaning; thus, by means of his intuitive capacity (rtogs-pa), he transmitted the Atiyoga, the All-perfect Doctrine. His disciples, who included learned scholars and knowledge-bearing Dākinīs, put the teachings into writing; together with dGa'-rab-rdo-rje they compiled an index (dkar-chag) of the six million four hundred thousand rDzogs-chen verses.

Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen During that same time, in a village just west of Vajrāsana (rDo-rje-gdan), there lived a very learned Brahmin by the name of sNying-po-grub-pa, who was a master of Sanskrit, linguistics, philosophy, logic, and art. Because of his comprehensive knowledge of the sacred writings he was also known as 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen (Mañjuśrīmitra). One day he was visited by the bodily apparition of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who advised him to go to the cremation ground at Śītavana where he would find an enlightened teacher who would explain to him the direct course to Buddhahood.

'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen studied with dGa'-rab-rdo-rje for seventy-five years and received innumerable instructions in the Dharma, including the whole of the rDzogs-chen (Atiyoga) system, which was directly transmitted to him from the mind of rDo-rje-sems-dpa' by way of the voice of his teacher. After passing all the lineages of the teachings to 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje manifested his body as the nature of light and disappeared. At the commemoration ceremony after his passing, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje reappeared at the fountain of the River Tan-tig, surrounded by light and numerous spiritual emanations. He then handed 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen a golden box which contained all of the six million four hundred thousand Atiyoga verses.

'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen divided these into the three sections of the Atiyoga. As there was no one prepared to receive his explanations concerning the main body of the first section, he hid the texts underneath a rock east of Bodh Gayā and sealed them with a double vajra. He then went to the cremation ground of So-sa'i-gling, where for nine hundred years he stayed absorbed in meditation.



Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen

Śrī Simha In the year 289 C.E. in the country known as 'the Black Expanse' (Western China or Khotan), Śrī Simha was born to a wise and virtuous householder. At the age of fifteen he went to the Bodhi tree temple, where he studied literature, astrology, grammar, logic, and religion for three years, becoming renowned as a scholar.

One night, in the locality of gSer-gling, Avalokiteśvara appeared to him and instructed him to go to the cremation ground of So-sa'i-gling in India. Before following the Bodhisattva's advice, Śrī Simha decided first to undergo preliminary studies in Tantra. So he journeyed to Wu-ta'i-shan, 'The Five Mountain Peaks' (Ri-bo-rtse-lnga) in China, a famous place of pilgrimage dedicated to Mañjuśrī, where he studied the exoteric and esoteric Tantra with the teacher Bhelakīrti for seven years. He



Śrī Simha

became a monk and practiced according to the Vinaya methods for three years at Yar-tha in China.

At further requests by the Lord of Compassion, he finally set out for India in search of 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen. Because of his spiritual power (siddhi), he encountered no hardship in his travels, and safely arrived at the cremation ground So-sa'i-gling, where he was accepted as a student. 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen gave him instructions and exposition on the more difficult areas of study for twenty-five years until, assured of his student's success, he dissolved into a mass of light. 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen then appeared to Śrī Simha in a vision, giving him final instructions and presenting him with a box inlaid with precious gems that contained the 'Six Meditation Experiences' (sgom-nyams-drug-pa). Upon

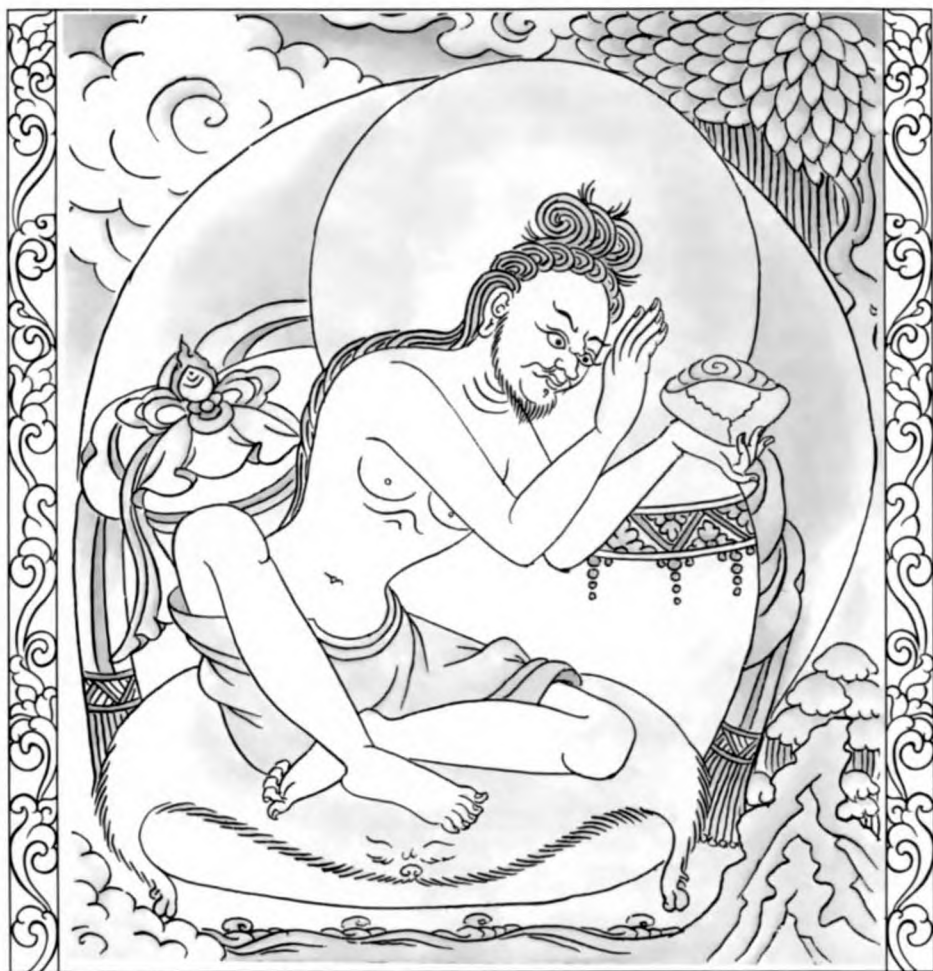
reading these texts, Śrī Śiṃha immediately realized the same intrinsic awareness as 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen.

One hundred and twenty-five years after his death, Slob-dpon 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen was miraculously reborn, without physical parents, in gSer-gyi-brgyan-pa'i-gling, a western region of India. This incarnation of 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen instructed Padmasambhava, the Lotus-born, in all the exoteric and esoteric Tantra (sngags-phyi-dang-nang). He also taught Āryadeva the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen) doctrine, whereupon the latter renounced the world and achieved the rainbow body.

After his teacher's passing, Śrī Śiṃha went to Vajrāsana and uncovered the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen) Tantra concerning the Guidance Section (Man-ngag-gi-sde), which 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen had hidden there. Śrī Śiṃha divided the whole section of the Instructions into four parts: the 'exoteric cycle' (phyi-skor), the 'esoteric cycle' (nang-skor), the 'secret cycle' (gsang-skor), and the 'most inner secret cycle' (gsang-ba-bla-named-pa'i-skor). He took the first three cycles and hid them in the garret floor of the temple Byang-chub-zhing. According to the prophecy of the Ḍākinī, he concealed the fourth part, the most inner secret cycle, in a column of the temple bKra-shis-khrigs-sgo and also placed them in his heart, to be revealed only to Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, and other bestowers of spiritual inspiration. Śrī Śiṃha then went to the cremation ground called bSil-byed, where certain non-human beings honored him. He taught the Dharma and stayed there in meditation.

Śrī Śiṃha is an important link in the rise of the lineage holders of the higher rNying-ma Tantras. The bsTan-'gyur contains about twenty-five works either composed or co-translated by him. His works reveal a profound understanding of the Indian philosophical schools. He conferred his Oral transmission on Vairotsana, who was often a co-author with him.

The three progenitors of this lineage, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen, and Śrī Śiṃha, all attained rainbow bodies and disappeared without leaving a trace. These enlightened masters achieved an internal stability and a sensitivity to others such that their role as teacher or 'spiritual guide' (bla-ma) exemplified the highest Bodhisattva action available to human beings. Countless thousands of lineage-holders throughout the centuries have totally comprehended the rDzogs-chen teachings and methods stemming from these spiritual masters. The streamlined methods they taught, based in rDzogs-chen, have the ability to direct one to the citadel of Buddhahood in a single lifetime.



Ye-shes-mdo

Ye-shes-mdo After receiving empowerments from Śrī Siṃha, Ye-shes-mdo meditated on the Atiyoga teachings for sixteen years. Thereafter, he traveled to various cemeteries and even to other realms. When Ye-shes-mdo was teaching in Khotan at the invitation of King dPal-byin, he beheld Śrī Siṃha sitting in mid-air, encircled by a halo of light. At this moment of his teacher's passing, Ye-shes-mdo received from the sky the book *gZer-bu-bdun-pa*, which contained seven essential rDzogs-chen teachings and the last teachings of Śrī Siṃha.

Following the instructions given there, Ye-shes-mdo recovered the Secret Instructions of the sNying-thig from the column of the temple of bKra-shis-khrigs-sgo; he then journeyed to the cremation ground Bha-shing, where he found numerous other rDzogs-chen texts. He preached the secret instructions of the sNying-thig to worldly and transworldly



Vimalamitra

beings. Remaining in the cremation ground for many years, he received numerous other teachings from Śrī Simha through visions.

Ten years after conferring the rDzogs-chen empowerments on Vimalamitra, Ye-shes-mdo, due to his spiritual purity, attained a rainbow body; empowered by a brilliant light, he passed away at the age of one hundred and thirteen without leaving a trace.

Vimalamitra Mahāpaṇḍita Vimalamitra was born in western India and began his studies in the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna at a very early age. Having become a scholar in the Sarvāstivādin Vinaya, he then studied the numerous Sūtras and Śāstras with the five hundred paṇḍitas who resided at Bodh Gayā (rDo-rje-gdan). He acquired a great respect for the writings of Vasubandhu and other early masters. After fully mastering

the Three Collections (Tripiṭaka), he began his studies in the Vajrayāna under the Ācārya Buddhaguhya (Sangs-rgyas-gsang-ba).

Vimalamitra then journeyed to China where he studied for nine years with Śrī Siṃha, receiving the inner, outer, and secret cycles of the Oral transmission (snyan-brgyud) of the Atiyoga. Upon returning to India, he transmitted these teachings to Ye-shes-mdo (Jñānasūtra), and with great enthusiasm these two great masters returned to China, where, as predicted by the Dākinīs, they found Śrī Siṃha in the cremation ground bSil-byed.

During the following twelve years Śrī Siṃha conferred upon them further teachings of the Oral transmission of the inner, outer, and secret cycles. In the course of time Śrī Siṃha transmitted to Ye-shes-mdo the most inner secret teachings of the Atiyoga as well. Thus, Ye-shes-mdo learned all the esoteric instructions and initiations of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen), and his mind was completely transformed into the nature of these profound instructions.

When Vimalamitra was over one hundred years old, he journeyed to the Bha-shing cemetery to receive teachings from Ye-shes-mdo, as prophesied by a Dākinī. As he bowed his head in obeisance to the master, immeasurable rays of light came forth from his forehead. Ye-shes-mdo then conferred upon Vimalamitra the three exoteric and esoteric empowerments he had received from Śrī Siṃha. At that moment the seed syllable AH appeared in white on the tip of Vimalamitra's nose. Thus, Ye-shes-mdo imparted to him the most profound teachings of the Atiyoga system, the 'Heart-drop Instructions' (sNying-thig-gi-gdams-pa).

After the passing of his master, Vimalamitra proceeded eastward to Kāmarūpa (Ka-ma-ru), where King Siṃhabhadra (Seng-ge-bzang-po) ruled, and stayed in the temple there for twenty years as a court chaplain. Afterwards, he went to the city of Bhiryal, where he became a monk and was patronized by King Dharmapāla. Next, he traveled north to the burial ground Rab-tu-s nang-byed where he practiced the teachings and taught the Dharma to the non-human beings who resided there. He also practiced the 'Quintessential Instruction', the supremely subtle teachings leading to perfect attainment.

During the seven year period of his residency, he made three copies of the texts that had been given to him by the Dākinīs. He hid one copy on the 'island in the ocean where the golden sand is scattered' (rGya-mtsho-gser-gyi-bye-ma-gdal-ba'i-gling) in the western sector of

the country of Uḍḍiyāna. The second copy he hid under a rock at gSer-gling in Kashmir, and the last copy was hidden in the Rab-tu-snang-byed cremation ground as an aid to the Ḍākinīs. There Vimalamitra practiced the highest teachings of the Tantras, and by means of repeated oral instruction, enlightened numerous beings who dwelled there.

Following this, Vimalamitra traveled to Uḍḍiyāna, where he instructed King Indrabodhi the Middle for many years. While he was teaching there, King Khri-srong-lde-btsan of Tibet sent sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan, rMa Rin-chen-mchog, and others to invite Vimalamitra to spread the Dharma in Tibet. After having presented Vimalamitra with seven precious golden images and a large quantity of gold dust, the envoys made their request. Though King Indrabodhi was opposed to his leaving, Vimalamitra set out for Tibet accompanied by his attendant, the Ācārya Kṣitigarbha (Sa'i-snying-po), the Tibetan lo-tṣā-bas, and a caravan of sacred texts.

That very night the people of King Indrabodhi's kingdom dreamt that the sun, moon, flowers, trees, and all the crops were leaning toward Tibet. All of nature seemed disturbed, and even the astrologers calculated inauspicious omens. King Indrabodhi then realized that he had relinquished a most precious jewel to the Tibetans, and he hastily sent swift-footed messengers to Tibet with instructions to place warning signs in all the valleys and crossroads of Tibet. These signs proclaimed that the Tibetan translators had carried out of India pernicious magical formulas which would lead the entire kingdom of Tibet to ruin.

In spite of such obstacles, when Vimalamitra arrived at bSam-yas monastery, Khri-srong-lde-btsan and his subjects received him most warmly. In the meantime, however, some of the king's ministers who had become jealous took notice of the vicious rumors; loudly questioning Vimalamitra's credibility, they claimed that he was worthy of renown only as a black magician. The king was overcome with doubt and grief and the translators became depressed and disappointed, but on the morning of the third day Vimalamitra put all their doubts to rest.

In the central section of bSam-yas, where Vimalamitra was meditating, there was enshrined a clay image of Vairocana. After Vimalamitra uttered a powerful mantra, the image turned into a heap of dust. At first, the ministers believed that this gesture only confirmed their suspicions, but Vimalamitra placed his hand over the broken pieces of clay and restored them into a very handsome image of Vairocana, from which

streams of light emanated, pervading the entire inner sanctuary of bSam-yas.

Thereupon, Khri-srong-lde-btsan built upon a tall pillar a turquoise-studded throne inlaid with gold, and from this seat of honor Vimalamitra proceeded to explain the Sūtras and Tantras and their commentaries. Through Vimalamitra's collaboration with Tibetan scholars, many other outer, inner, and secret treatises of the Vajrayāna were translated. He was aided by gNyags Jñānakumāra, sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan, gYu-sgra-snying-po, and rMa Rin-chen-mchog, to whom he transmitted the Mahāyoga teachings of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra. All of these translators became major influences in laying the foundation for the early preservation and transmission of rNying-ma texts and oral teachings. They were not ordinary scholars but incarnate Bodhisattvas who demonstrated unusual abilities to directly translate the essential meanings of the texts.

Vimalamitra, together with these scholars, translated the rDo-rje-sems-dpa'-sgyu-'phrul-dra-ba, the Vajra-kīla-rdo-rje-phur-pa, the dPal-yang-dag, and various texts on rDzogs-chen. The Tibetan bsTan-'gyur contains over seventy translations by Vimalamitra, as well as ten texts that he authored. In addition, the rNying-ma'i-rgyud-'bum contains many works translated by Vimalamitra.

Vimalamitra lived in Tibet for thirteen years, and during that time he worked in close collaboration with each of the principal disciples of Padmasambhava. Through meditative visions, Vimalamitra met dGa'-rab-rdo-rje seven times, and received from him the direct transmission of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen) lineage. Master of both the Sūtras and Mantrayāna, Vimalamitra secretly taught the precepts of the Man-ngag-snying-thig to Khri-srong-lde-btsan and to Nyang Ting-'dzin-bzang-po, two of his foremost disciples. Because of his rare and comprehensive understanding of the entire corpus of the Buddhist tradition, and because of his desire to preserve the deepest meditative practices, Vimalamitra wrote four original works in the Tibetan language and secretly hid them near bSam-yas in the Red Rock Cave at mChims-phu.

He later retired to a mountain retreat at Wu-ta'i-shan in China, where he passed away at an age of well over two hundred years. Vimalamitra promised that as long as the Buddhadharma prevailed, he would reincarnate in Tibet each century in order to maintain the teaching of the 'Quintessential Instructions'. Of the great paṇḍita's many

reincarnations, Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa in the fourteenth century and 'Jigs-med-gling-pa in the eighteenth century are the two most important. Many lamas since the time of Vimalamitra have attained rainbow bodies through practicing his teachings.

Direct Transmission The direct realization lineages of the Tantras were secretly and orally handed down from teacher to disciple. The Tantras were never openly displayed or discussed in public, but were reserved for those select few who had the necessary intellectual and psychological prerequisites. The special mantras, visualizations, and inner esoteric instructions were thus carefully guarded by the masters from India, Nepal, China, Burma, and elsewhere.

This method of direct transmission, practiced from the earliest times, often involved visionary experience. For example, although Śrī Sīrṃha obtained many of the esoteric teachings from 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen orally, he also received a direct visionary transmission from dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, acquiring the lde-mig or 'cipher key' to the esoteric precepts (Man-ngag-gi-sde).

Among countless other examples is the master Rang-byung-rdo-rje, (the third Karma-pa), student of the rNying-ma-pa master Rig-'dzin Ku-ma-ra-dza, who received the oral precepts while deep in meditation when he visually perceived Vimalamitra through the psychic aperture (mdzod-spu, ūrṇa-kośa) in the center of his forehead. Through this vision, he was able to comprehend perfectly the vast teachings of the Atiyoga.

Because of the secret nature of such direct transmission, contemporaries of great masters often did not recognize their attainments. Examples of fully realized masters who at first went unacknowledged include Kha-che Paṅ-chen Śākyaśrī, the reincarnation of a disciple of dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, who received the Vajrakīla Sādhana from Padma-sambhava. The Indian masters Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas and Buddhaguhya also practiced and attained realization without any external sign. The famous yogi Milarepa (Mi-la-ras-pa), who received important lineages of the Siddha Nāropa passed on to him by his master, the eleventh century master Marpa Lo-tsā-ba, spent years in practice on his own, perfecting the advanced methods leading to realization. So well did these accomplished Siddhas quietly traverse the difficult path to enlightenment that their achievements went unrecognized until the goal was reached.

The Transmission of the Mahāyoga and the Lineage of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra

Mahāyoga (rGyud-mahāyoga'i-theg-pa) refers to Being-as-such, manifested through the Buddha's way of being and at the same time ever-present and in all things. This sense of totality, comprising the whole of Being, is represented by the Ādibuddha Kun-tu-bzang-po. Completely pure creativity, the Ādibuddha is capable of manifesting as and through anything and everything. At the same time, the Ādibuddha embodies the unchanging great bliss which cannot be encompassed by any concept, thus demonstrating the nature of being invariable.

As the primordial representative of Dharmakāya (chos-sku), the Ādibuddha is the origin of the Lineage of Buddha Intentionality (rgyal-badgongs-brgyud) and resides in Akanīṣṭha, the most supreme of the pure heaven realms. The Ādibuddha as a symbol for that which is in a state of utter perfection remains as a totality pattern representing every undulation of being-made-manifest. In being the source of the maṇḍala of 'existence' (sku) and 'awareness' (ye-shes), the Ādibuddha is also the primogenitor of the Dharmadhātu (chos-kyi-dbyings). It is the Dharmakāya, 'source' of all and everything, yet nothing in itself, that is spontaneously present as the maṇḍala of the Sambhogakāya, which is the Five Buddha Families (rgyal-tshab-rigs-lnga) appearing as a five-fold light.

Thus, the transmission of the Mahāyoga originates in the Sphere of Ultimate Being, the Dharmakāya. From there it is transmitted by Kun-tu-bzang-po to the five affinity patterns or Buddha families, which can be said to reside in the five heavenly spheres of the Sambhogakāya. This manifestation pattern forms the maṇḍala of the Rūpakāya, extending to the five heavenly realms: sTug-po-bkod-pa in the Center, mNgon-dga' in the East, Rin-po-che-brgyan-pa in the South; bDe-ba-can in the West; and Las-rab-grub-pa in the North.

From these divine abodes arise the five principal Buddhas, as well as all the Buddhas who teach in the six realms. In the center of the maṇḍala resides Vairocana Buddha (sometimes Vajrasattva), and from here the transmission extends to the three higher Bodhisattvas (rigs-gsum-drwa-lnga), who are primogenitors of the three lineages of Vidyādhara (Rig-'dzin): Avalokiteśvara (sPyan-ras-gzigs) who imparts the transmission to the Nāgas; Mañjuśrī (Jam-dpal-dbyangs), who imparts the transmission to the Devas and Asuras of the heaven realms; and Vajrapāṇi (Phyag-na-rdo-rje), who imparts the transmission to the



Indrabodhi

world of human beings through the instrumentality of the *Nirmāṇakāya* manifestations (*sprul-sku*).

Vajrasattva, the spiritual intermediary between the *Dharmakāya* and *Sambhogakāya*, transmitted the basis for the *Mahāyoga*, consisting of eighteen *Mahāyoga Tantras*, to Vajrapāṇi. Vajrapāṇi, in turn, was the *Vidyādhara* who transmitted this body of teaching to the Human tradition, beginning with King Indrabodhi (*Indrabhūti*), also known as *rGyal-po-dzā*.

The Eighteen Mahāyoga Tantras. Outlined below are the five principal classifications of the *Mahāyoga Tantras*:

- I. *rTsa-ba-rgyud-sde-lnga'i-nang-tshan*: The five basic *Mahāyoga Tantras*, concerned with the five aspects of Buddhahood

- A. Sangs-rgyas-mnyam-sbyor (sKu'i-rgyud-dpal-sangs-rgyas-thams-cad-mnyam-par-sbyor-ba). The Tantra dealing with 'existence' (sku, kāya) [1]
 - B. gSung-thig-le (gSung-gi-rgyud-zla-gsang-thig-le). The Tantra dealing with 'communication' (gsung, vāk) [2]
 - C. gSang-ba-'dus-pa (Thugs-kyi-rgyud-gsang-ba-'dus-pa). The Tantra dealing with 'noeticness' or 'spirituality' (thugs, citta) [3]
 - D. dPal-mchog-dang-po (Yon-tan-gyi-rgyud-dpal-mchog-dang-po). The Tantra dealing with 'excellent capabilities' (yon-tan, guṇa) [4]
 - E. Kar-ma-ma-le ('Phrin-las-kyi-rgyud-kar-ma-ma-le). The Tantra dealing with 'activity' or 'performance' (phrin-las, karma) [5]
- II. Rol-pa'i-rgyud-sde-lnga: The five Tantras which are additions to the Section of Meditative Realization (sgrub-sde)
- A. (sKu-) gShin-rje-skor. [6]
 - 1. Kha-thun-nag-po'i-skor
 - 2. gNubs-lugs-gshin-rje-ru-mtshan-dmar-po
 - B. (gSung-) rTa-mchog-rol-pa'i-skor [7]
 - C. (Thugs-) He-ru-ka-rol-pa'i-skor [8]
 - D. (Yon-tan-) bDud-rtsi-rol-pa'i-skor [9]
 - E. ('Phrin-las-) Phur-pa-rol-pa'i-skor [10]
 - 1. Rog-lugs (following the lineage of Rog Shes-rab-'od)
 - 2. Rong-zom-lugs (following the lineage of Rong-zom)
- III. sPyod-pa'i-yan-lag-tu-'gro-ba'i-rgyud-sde-lnga [11–15]: The five Tantras which are additions to the Caryā-yoga (spyod-pa). They deal principally with the lived experience of human beings in their being with others and in their performance of spiritual rituals and observances.
- IV. Ma-tshang-kha-skong-gi-rgyud-sde-gnyis-kyi-skor [16–17]: Two later supplemental Tantras (phyi-ma'i-rgyud).
- V. (sPyi-rgyud-) sGyu-'phrul-drwa-ba'i-skor [18]: The Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra (sGyu-'phrul-gsang-ba-snying-po). This is the root text of the entire Mahāyoga group, and the most important text for this division.

The Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra has inspired numerous commentaries including Padmasambhava's Garland of Views (Man-ngag-lta-ba'i-phreng-ba), an important commentary by King Indrabodhi, and one by Vimalamitra. gYung-ston rDo-rje-dpal-bzang, one of the most important

rNying-ma masters, wrote a commentary, the dPal-gsang-ba-snying-po'i-rgyud-don-gsal-byed-me-long, and Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po composed two important texts on this Tantra. Both O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa and his brother Lo-chen Dharmasrī also wrote major commentaries on the text, as did the Ācārya Nyi-ma-nyi-'od-seng-ge, of the lineage of Vairotsana. The omniscient master Klong-chen-pa wrote three voluminous commentaries contained in the Mun-sel-skor-gsum: sPyi-don-yid-kyi-mun-sel, gZhung-don-phyogs-bcu'i-mun-sel, and bsDus-don-ma-rig-mun-sel. Of these, the gZhung-don-phyogs-bcu'i-mun-sel is the most lucid interpretation and, it has remained unsurpassed to this day. Lama Mi-pham wrote a beautiful commentary on this text.

The eighteen Mahāyoga Tantras, arising from the Dharmadhātu (chos-dbyings), are without origin or cause; they are the transmission of the spontaneously present, arising from the extratemporal sphere and finding its way to the first human recipient, King Indrabodhi. According to the tradition of the Tantras, King Indrabodhi came into the world twenty-eight years after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa and received the esoteric transmission of the sGyu-'phrul by way of the root Mahāyoga text, the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra, from the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. Like all Tantras of this transmission, the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra emphasizes appropriate action (thabs) and the Developing Stage (bskyed-rim).

After the Second Transmission of the Tantra in Tibet, doubts were expressed as the authenticity of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra. However, in the fourteenth century, Zhang-btsun Lo-tsā-ba discovered the original manuscript of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra in Padmasambhava's own handwriting at bSam-yas monastery. After it was shown to Sa-skya Paṇḍita and Bu-ston Rin-po-che, the adherents of the New Tantrism gained new respect for the Mahāyoga transmission.

The transmission of the sGyu-'phrul occurred through seven successive dreams or visions provided by Vajrapāṇi to King Indrabodhi. At first, Indrabodhi did not understand the text of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra, so he went to the Siddha Ku-ku-rā-dza, who understood the text but could not entirely explain its meaning. Ku-ku-rā-dza therefore instructed the king to meditate on Vajrasattva, which he did so earnestly that a vision of the Bodhisattva was perfectly realized in his mind. Thoroughly understanding the text, Indrabodhi became enlightened. The king then imparted the entire body of teachings to Ku-ku-rā-dza, who attained the same realization as Indrabodhi.



Ku-ku-rā-dza

Ku-ku-rā-dza then studied the one hundred thousand chapters of the Mahāyoga Tantras, completely comprehending their meanings. While Vajrasattva psychically tutored him over a period of seven months, Ku-ku-rā-dza intensely practiced the rDo-rje-sems-dpa' Sādhana. Upon mastering these instructions from Vajrasattva, Ku-ku-rā-dza beheld a vision of Vajrapāṇi in which he imparted to him all the instructions concerning the nature of all Dharmas and all teachings.

Ku-ku-rā-dza then retired to the forest where he lived among wild animals, neither being frightened by the most ferocious of them nor arousing fear in even the most timid of the creatures. During the day, he would manifest as master of yoga; at night, he would appear in various localities throughout the world to teach the Mahāyoga Tantras. In



Līlavajra

the course of his twelve intensive years of teaching, one hundred thousand of his students achieved enlightenment.

Ku-ku-rā-dza, one of the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, is the foremost of the five disciples of King Indrabodhi. The other four are: Li-tsā-bi 'Phrin-las-'brag-pa (dGe-bsnyen Li-tsā-ba Dri-med-grags), Śatraputri, Nāgaputri, and Guhyaputri. Each of these disciples went to a different locality to spread the teachings of the Mahāyoga.

Ku-ku-rā-dza passed the lineage stemming from Indrabodhi the Elder to Indrabodhi the Middle, and ten thousand of his disciples became enlightened. Then Indrabodhi the Middle imparted the teachings to Siṃha-rā-dza, and one thousand of his disciples attained enlightenment. From Siṃha-rā-dza the lineage was transmitted to Upā-rā-dza, and one hundred of his disciples became enlightened. Upā-rā-dza then

taught the princess Gom-ma-devī, and five hundred of her disciples became instantaneously enlightened. This line of transmission then spread to the realms of the Devas, Yakṣas, Nāgas, Rudras, and humans.

After Princess Gom-ma-devī became enlightened, she instructed the highly respected scholar Līlavajra (sGeg-pa-rdo-rje), who had been teaching at Nālandā for over ten years. He attained siddhi and became endowed with psychic abilities—by clearly apprehending the lucent nature of mind, he directly contacted Avalokiteśvara (sPyan-ras-gzigs), the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and Tārā (sGrol-ma), the redemptress. Upon becoming highly learned in the Mahāyoga Tantras, he traveled to parts of Uḍḍiyāna and Kapilavastu to promulgate the esoteric transmission, and as a result of his accomplishment, the Mahāyoga teachings and practices spread widely in those areas. Later, he received the appellation sNatshogs-rdo-rje, because he could disguise himself by manifesting in many forms, such as elephants, horses, children, cows, and peacocks. Līlavajra wrote a number of expositions and commentaries which are available in Tibetan translation.

Līlavajra himself never journeyed to Tibet, but he transmitted the Mahāyoga lineage to each of his three major disciples, Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava, and Buddhaguhya, and they became the principal transmitters of the Mahāyoga in that country. Each of these three enlightened masters contributed his own translation of the Guhya-mūla-garbhataṅtra to the Tibetan lineage. The three translations, which were done at various times, differed only slightly in wording.

Padmasambhava, Buddhaguhya, and other masters received the esoteric transmission of the Tantras from the human (e.g., Indrabodhi) or non-human (e.g., Vajrapāṇi) Vidyādhara, either directly from the progenitors of the lineage or indirectly through a lineage of successive masters.³ The former is known as the Shorter Lineage and may be

3. The chart of these lineages which appears in the appendix is not intended to suggest a static order of transmission. The lineages are so interpenetrating that any particular representation of a spiritual lineage simply depends upon which individual masters and teachings are emphasized. A lineage founded upon a particular mode of instruction or Tantric Cycle may follow a genealogy centered around localities, ranging from mountain retreats to a favorite hamlet to large monastic institutions. For example, when specific meditative practices, esoteric empowerments, or sādhanas are the key to the development of spiritual insight, quiet retreat centers may be most suitable as the center of transmission, but transmission under other, quite different circumstances is equally possible.

exemplified by Padmasambhava directly receiving the Mahāyoga transmission from Vajrasattva, and by Buddhaguhya receiving it from Indrabodhi the Elder. The significance of the Shorter Lineage is very close to the meaning of rgyal-ba-dgongs-brgyud (Buddha Intentionality), as its method of transmission is beyond explanation or words. The Longer Lineage is exemplified by these masters receiving the lineage through a series of human masters.

According to the traditional view, the Tantric Cycle of the sGyu-'phrul, representing the principal lineage of the Mahāyoga, originated chiefly with Buddhaguhya (Sangs-rgyas-gsang-ba), who resided on the heavenly Mount Kailāśa, which towers over the rim of the turquoise circle of Lake Manasarowar. Having received the Mahāyoga lineage from Līlavajra, he was the holder of the root text of the sGyu-'phrul, the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra.

In the principal line of the bKa'-ma transmission, Buddhaguhya was the direct disciple of Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes-zhabs (Buddhajñānapāda); following the line of the Mahāyoga transmission, he received the Longer Lineage of the sGyu-'phrul from Līlavajra and the Shorter Lineage from King Indrabodhi. The great Slob-dpon Vimalamitra was foremost among Buddhaguhya's five hundred disciples. Vimalamitra also received the esoteric Mahāyoga from Līlavajra, as well as directly from Mañjuśrī. Vimalamitra then taught the sGyu-'phrul cycle to rMa Rin-chen-mchog, and together they translated the entire text of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra. This line of transmission passed through gTsong-tso Rin-chen-gzhon-nu and Gye-re mChog-skyong, who imparted it to Dar-rje dPal-gyi-grags-pa and Zhang rGyal-ba'i-yon-tan. From Zhang onwards, the lineage became known as the bKa'-mchims-phu-ba, or the 'Lineage of Precepts' (Man-ngag-brgyud).

The lineage of Dar-rje dPal-gyi-grags-pa spread through the central districts of dBus and gTsang, as well as Khams. Among the followers of the lineage of Dar-rje, two schools are known to have existed: the 'School of dBus' (dBus-lugs-pa) and the 'School of Khams' (Khams-lugs-pa). In Khams, the spiritual descendants of rMa Rin-chen-mchog specialized in the practice of the Vajrakīla Sādhana and transmitted it to Kaḥ-dam-pa bDe-gshegs, who founded Kaḥ-thog monastery (1159), the first major rNying-ma monastery constructed during the second period of Dharma transmission.

The Master Vairotsana Vairotsana (rNam-par-s nang-mdzad) was born of the sPa-gor clan in the fertile valley of sNye-mo Bye-mkhas



Vairotsana

(sNye-mo rGyal-byed-tshal) which lies between rGyal-rtse (Gyantse) and Lha-sa. One of Padmasambhava's three most important disciples, he was also one of the original seven monks (sad-mi) ordained by Śāntarakṣita. He received the principal lineage of the Mahāyoga from Buddhaguhya and the esoteric transmission from his teacher Śrī Simha.

Vairotsana had been sent by Khri-srong-lde-btsan to India, where he travelled from place to place receiving the pinnacle of Buddhist teachings from over three hundred prominent masters, scholars, and translators. While in India, he gained a wide reputation as a brilliant young scholar by demonstrating his proficiency in discourse and practice. When the Indian paṇḍitas realized that he would soon return to Tibet, they felt great compassion for the Tibetans, whom they knew had not fully received the teachings of the Dharma. So they secretly



rGyal-ba mChog-dbyangs

bestowed on Vairotsana all the precious root Tantras of the Sems-sde and Klong-sde classes of the Atiyoga rDzogs-chen teachings. Only a few copies of these early Tantras were available, but even these were privately removed from their concealed locations at Bodh Gayā and the surrounding regions, and were given to Vairotsana. By the tenth century, these root Tantras were very rare in India, where both the texts and Oral transmission were diminishing; it appears that they were preserved only in Tibet, at bSam-yas monastery and the surrounding regions.

During his travels, Vairotsana visited many remote areas including Byang-thang in northern Tibet, Mongolia, Khotan, and China. Through his innumerable experiences with over twenty-five gifted masters from these regions where Buddhism had spread, Vairotsana became the direct recipient of the teachings of the Sūtrayāna, Pāramitāyāna, and Vajrayāna.



Nam-mkha'i snying-po

Upon his return to Tibet, he transmitted what he had learned to the scholars in the court of King Khri-srong-lde-btsan; and the most precious and powerful of these teachings he privately imparted to the king and to a few of his most intellectually gifted and trusted nobility.

Vairotsana's teachings, however, caused disharmony in the king's court. Some of the nobility were members of an underground party that had opposed, from the beginning, the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. Although not all of these men were ardent followers of Bon, they tended to side with the Bon, not only because its teachings were linked to the early beliefs and legendary history of Tibet, but also because these men were rapidly losing their ministerial powers as a result of the incoming Dharma. Furthermore, individual jealousies arose among certain members of the nobility and these became directed toward Vairotsana.



Nam-mkha'i 'jigs-med

Damaging rumors about the nature of Vairotsana's teachings were circulated from the Indian side by those who were jealous that Vairotsana had been given such highly guarded doctrines. Counterfeit letters were sent to the court to convince the royalty that Vairotsana was not teaching genuine Buddhism and that the texts and oral instructions he was imparting were apocryphal and contained mystic formulas which could bring much harm to the county.

At this time, Khri-srong-lde-btsan had five wives: mChims-bza' lHa-mo-btsan, mKhar-chen-bza' mTsho-rgyal, 'Bro-bza' Byang-chub-sgron, Pho-yong-bza' rGyal-mo-btsan, and Tshe-spong-bza' rMa-rgyal mTsho-skar-ma. Tshe-spong-bza', a fervent supporter of Bon, had been infatuated with Vairotsana even before his journey to India. Vairotsana discouraged her attentions, but one day she would not leave him alone.



Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan

She even tried to detain him in a room by locking the door, but Vairotsana managed to escape from her. Spitefully, she accused him of making improper advances. As a result of the malicious slander, the king decided to provide a refuge for the master in his private chambers.

When Vairotsana was no longer seen in public, rumors began to spread that even the king had doubts about Vairotsana's authenticity and had thus banished Vairotsana to east Tibet in accordance with the demands of the nobility. For a while the nobility remained content; however, because of the queen's failure in seducing Vairotsana, she began spreading rumors that he was being protected in the chambers of the king, and the king was accused of trickery and of fostering a split in the nobility. A contingent of ministers even secretly plotted to seal



gYu-sgra-snying-po

Vairotsana in a copper casket and cast him into the river. Finally, Khri-srong-lde-btsan was pressured into banishing the accomplished master, but by this time Vairotsana had slipped away toward east Tibet.

After some time had passed, Khri-srong-lde-btsan began to seek out another spiritual guide for his court who would be acceptable to the nobility. At the suggestion of a trusted advisor of the palace, Nyang (Myang) Ting-'dzin-bzang-po, who had the faculty of prescience, the king sent sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs and Cog-ro Klu'i-rgyal-mtshan to India to invite Vimalamitra to teach the quintessence of the Buddhadharma to the royal court.

When Vimalamitra arrived in Tibet, Khri-srong-lde-btsan was amazed to hear teachings from him that were similar to those delivered



dPal-gyi-seng-ge

by Vairotsana. And, when the king showed him the texts which Vairotsana had asked the king to secretly safeguard, Vimalamitra affirmed that the texts were not only genuine, but were rare and valuable.

Thus, all the doubts which the king had begun to have about Vairotsana and his doctrines were put to rest. Meanwhile, Vimalamitra began his teaching appointment with lectures on Vinaya and basic Dharma teachings, thus remaining conservative and conventional in his teachings so as to restore the nobility's confidence in the Indian Tantric masters.

By this time, Vairotsana had passed through Khams in east Tibet and had founded a hermitage in the territory of rGyal-mo-rong. There he continued the spiritual lineage of Guru Padmasambhava, and received doctrines from followers of the Buddhist lineages that had developed in



rMa Rin-chen-mchog

these regions. Throughout his innumerable travels, Vairotsana mastered over three hundred dialects.

While he was in rGyal-mo-rong, Vairotsana taught the Inner Tantras to a few disciples, the brightest and most accomplished of whom was rGyal-mo gYu-sgra-snying-po. After instructing gYu-sgra in Sanskrit and the esoteric Tantras, Vairotsana asked him to travel to bSam-yas monastery in central Tibet in order to confirm a report by a wayfarer that only the practice of the Vinaya and study of the Sūtras were being taught there the higher Doctrines not even being discussed.

Wearing the tattered clothes of a mendicant, gYu-sgra-snying-po reached bSam-yas, where he found Vimalamitra teaching in the spacious Three-Pinnacled Temple. When queried by those nearby as to his identity and intentions, he mumbled three significant Sanskrit words. This



Sog-po dPal-gyi-ye-shes

startled his questioners, causing them to wonder if this ragged man could be a real scholar. Remaining at the rear of the hall and disdainfully propping his chin on his walking stick, he listened intently to Vimalamitra for some time. Finally he called out, asking Vimalamitra why he was teaching the Hīnayāna approach, which was not the direct course to enlightenment.

Vimalamitra pretended not to hear the question but closed his class early and asked one of his pupils to seek out the man who had shouted from the rear of the temple. gYu-sgra was found in a public house, drinking chang in the company of a merchant, and was invited to come talk with Vimalamitra. When asked who his teacher was, gYu-sgra replied that his teacher was Vairotsana of the sPa-gor clan and that he had come from rGyal-mo-rong. Then he asked Vimalamitra why he was teaching



Rig-'dzin Padma-'pbrin-las

inferior doctrines to those with superior minds. Vimalamitra thus realized that gYu-sgra had knowledge of the Tantras, so he sent a messenger to Khri-srong-lde-btsan informing him of the meeting.

Vimalamitra, up to that time, had been presenting Khri-srong-lde-btsan with a review of the teachings given to the king at an earlier time by Vairotsana. Once the king realized this, he saw that despite all the disruption in the court, it had been a mistake to send Vairotsana away. Therefore, he asked gYu-sgra to return to Vairotsana and implore him on behalf of the king to return to his court and continue his teachings.

In due time Vairotsana returned, and together with the mystic queen Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal, Khri-srong-lde-btsan, and Vimalamitra, he spread the exoteric and esoteric doctrines throughout the region.



mNga'-ris Pan'-chen

During his later career, Vairotsana taught the expositions on the sGyu-'phrul cycle which he had translated to gNyags Jñānakumāra, who, being a highly acclaimed translator himself, went over the text with Vairotsana and rMa Rin-chen-mchog, revising and improving the translation. gNyag Jñānakumāra's chief disciple, Sog-po dPal-gyi-ye-shes, was also a foremost disciple of Vairotsana.

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, who lived at the time of King Ral-pa-can (817–836), transmitted these teachings to five principal disciples: So Ye-shes-dbang-phyug, who specialized in philosophy; sPa-gor Blon-chen-'phags-pa; Ngan Yon-tan-mchog, who learned the method of obstructing bleeding; Gru Legs-pa'i-sgron-ma, who learned the system in poetic verses; and Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, his most important spiritual son, to whom he taught the secret and profound precepts until the disciple



rJe-btsun Seng-ge-dbang-phyug

possessed complete understanding of all the systems of meditation. Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho had two principal spiritual sons, Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho and Padma-dbang-gi-rgyal-po.

Nyang Shes-rab-mchog was a disciple of both Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho and his spiritual son, Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho. He was learned in the theory and application of the three classes of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen)—Sems-sde, Klong-sde, and Man-ngag-gi-sde—and built the Vihāra (gTsug-lag-khang) of gShongs at Ngag.

While practicing meditation on the rock of Ha'o-rgol, he had a vision of the Vajrakīla Maṇḍala, and there are many stories about his acquisition of psychic powers (siddhi), such as the ability to split a rock with a vajra. Nyang Shes-rab-mchog taught Nyang Ye-shes-'byung-gnas of Chos-lung his knowledge of the three classes of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-



Zur-po-che

chen). Most of their followers are called the 'School of Rong', or the 'School of Nyang', after their family names.

Thereafter, Nyang Ye-shes-'byung-gnas taught the venerable master, Zur-po-che the Elder (Zur-chen-pa), who excelled in the practice of the Vajrakīla Sādhana. Together with Zur-chung-pa and sGro-sbug-pa, these important masters are known as the Three Zur (Zur-rnam-pa-gsum).

Zur-po-che lHa-rje Zur-po-che Śākya-'byung-gnas (b. 954) had numerous teachers. He studied the sGyu-'phrul with Nyang Ye-shes-'byung-gnas of Chos-lung and obtained the bDud-rtsi (one of the eight rNying-ma propitiatory Tantras) from rJe Śākya-mchog of dGe-rong. From gNyan-nag dBang-grags of Yul-gsar, he obtained the secret initiation (gsang-dbang) and other inner practices, and from Thod-dkar Nam-mkha'-sde he received the mDo class of rNying-ma Tantras. 'Bre



lDang-ma lHun-rgyal

Khro-chung-pa of Upper Nyang instructed him in the two truths of ka-dag and lhun-grub and the Lam-rim-chen-mo. In addition, he obtained initiation into the Yang-dag (a rNying-ma propitiatory Tantra) from Rog Śākya-'byung-gnas of bSam-yas mChims-phu, as well as much instruction from the famed translator 'Brog-mi.

Zur-chen-pa's major contribution was to classify the Tantras, grouping the texts with their commentaries, the Tantras with their corresponding sādhanas, and the sādhanas with their ritual manuals. He lectured on these philosophies and meditative practices to large assemblies of disciples, and eventually established the vihāra of 'Ug-pa-lung (the Canyon of Owls). Nearby, he built an elaborate maṇḍala, erecting the images of the eight deities symbolizing the Eight rNying-ma Heruka Sādhanas (bKa'-brgyad). Thereafter, he received the name 'Ug-pa-lung-pa.



Zur-chung-pa

Once, while traveling in the mountains, 'Ug-pa-lung-pa captured a Nāga dwelling in the rock of 'Og-gdong, and put it in a jar which he sealed with a piece of leather. Thereafter, the Nāga acted as his attendant and gathered wine from all quarters. During the building and consecration of the 'Ug-pa-lung monastery, wine was served to all from this one jar, without exhausting its contents. 'Ug-pa-lung-pa borrowed cattle from the villagers and killed them during the consecration ceremony (shaston), but at the day's end, he returned all the borrowed cattle alive.⁴

4. Before the rise of Buddhism in Tibet, it was customary for animals to be killed to appease the wrath of evil spirits or non-humans (mi-ma-yin) believed to cause plagues and natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. After subduing these malignant apparitions by means of the Heruka Sādhana, Padmasambhava abolished the system of animal sacrifice, substituting barley cake offerings called gtor-ma.



Kah-dam-pa-bde-shegs

Zur-chung-pa Shortly before he passed away, 'Ug-pa-lung-pa met an elderly beggar monk, accompanied by his son, a young novice monk. When they arrived at the monastery, Zur-po-che asked them their family name. Upon hearing that it was Zur, Zur-po-che instructed the father to leave the young novice in his care and promised to foster the boy, to whom he gave the name Zur-chung-pa, or 'Little Zur'. Later, he became known as Zur-chung Shes-rab-grags-pa (1014–1074).

Under the care of Zur-po-che, Zur-chung-pa's knowledge excelled, for by following his master's wish in every detail, he became capable of benefiting all living beings. Zur-chung-pa attained the ability to raise himself into the air as high as a full-grown palm tree when he walked; when he chanted mantras, his voice could be heard echoing throughout the valleys. Whatever he needed always came to him—once when he

was tormented by heat while walking in the desert, he was offered wine; when climbing to the summit of a desert mountain, he was offered food. Even at a young age, he could sit in meditation, unmoved and unshakable as a mountain.

Thus, as a vase is filled to overflowing, Zur-chung-pa came to possess all wisdom. He mastered the Vajrasattva sādhana of meditation and mudrā and received a vision of Vajrasattva, through which he understood the nature of all perceptual objects to be of the nature of Vajrasattva. Zur-chung-pa gained the faculty of abiding in the effortless meditation of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen); he was matchless in debate, for his mind was not attached to any particular thought. He attracted, by his mere presence, hundreds of devoted followers. In his sixty-first year, having perfected the Atiyoga teachings, Zur-chung-pa passed away.

sGro-sbug-pa In the same year (1074) that Zur-chung-pa passed away, lHa-rje sGro-sbug-pa was born. In his youth he studied the Dharma, but as his responsibilities increased, he no longer had the time to continue his formal studies. So, he invited learned teachers to his home and thus mastered the Tantras, such as the sGyu-'phrul cycle of the Mahāyoga, the Anuyoga, and the Sems-sde or Mind Section of the Atiyoga, together with their respective precepts, methods of propitiation and ritual, and numerous empowerments. He also studied the system of the Atiyoga with Glan Śākya-byang-chub, and with lHa-rje Shangs-pa-nag-po studied the Tantra and the precepts of the 'later' lineage of the Atiyoga. lHa-rje sGro-sbug-pa, a manifestation of Vajrapāṇi (the guardian of all the Tantras [guhya-pati]), was one of the most important links in the propagation of the entire bKa'-ma transmission. He journeyed to the northern region to spread the doctrine of the Tantras to numerous assemblies of disciples, including over one thousand kalyāṇa-mitra (spiritual friends) who were already upholders of various philosophical traditions. All these disciples mastered the teachings and spread the Tantras far and wide.

Before his passing, sGro-sbug-pa invited a few of his disciples to a hilltop where they performed a ritual offering feast. Then lHa-rje instructed them, "Do not feel sad in my absence, for I shall pass into the realm of the Vidyādhara (Bearers of Pure Awareness) without leaving my physical body behind." After singing a spiritual song (do-ha), he raised himself into the air, and finally disappeared in the sky. His followers implored him to return, which he did, but reprimanded them for depending on his physical presence. A year later (1134) he passed away.



sGro-sbug-pa

lHa-rje rje-ston-rgya-nag Among the disciples of lHa-rje sGro-sbug-pa, the most excellent was lHa-rje rje-ston-rgya-nag. His grandfather built the vihāra of sKyī-mkhar, and his elder brothers were sent to study at the philosophical college in upper Nyang (Myang). lHa-rje rGya-nag used to bring them provisions, and while doing so listened to the exposition of the Doctrine.

He understood all the teachings after hearing them just one time; studying in this manner for nine years he learned the Prajñāpāramitā, the Abhidharma, the Nyāya and Pramāṇa, and the Mādhyamika. After that he studied the Tantras with lHa-rje sGro-sbug-pa, remaining with him for eleven years. sGro-sbug-pa bestowed on him all the secret precepts and detailed notes on their branches, and implanted in him effective methods of practice.

lHa-rje lHa-khang-pa lHa-rje lHa-khang-pa (1094–1149), another disciple of sGro-sbug-pa, was attended by sTon-shāk and Zhig-po, both natives of dBus, along with about thirty other students of sGro-sbug-pa. Between the ages of twenty-one and thirty, he mastered all of the Abhidharma and the texts and sādhanas of the Mantrayāna, together with their precepts, although he emphasized the Vajrakīla Cycle. He heard the system of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen) according to the Khams tradition from Dam-pa sBor-mang and from a Yoginī by the name of Jo-mo Myang-mo. Afterwards, he continued his studies under sGro-sbug-pa until he was forty-one, when sGro-sbug-pa passed away. From then until he passed away at the age of fifty-six, he labored for the benefit of others.

Zhig-po of dBus Zhig-po of dBus, after living the life of a householder in the valley of Yar-lung, studied under both sGro-sbug-pa and lHa-rje rGya-nag-pa, from whom he learned the three applications of the Developing Stage and Fulfillment Stage (bskyed-rdzogs) as implemented in the Atiyoga: bskyed-rim, rdzogs-rim and rdzogs-chen. He then decided to journey to Nepal, but one night while on the road, it occurred to him that although he possessed considerable knowledge of the Dharma, he had no precepts by which to practice this understanding. Thus, he returned to his teacher, who bestowed on him the precepts of the Precious Oral tradition (snyan-brgyud).

Zhig-po then left again for Nepal, and proceeded toward the mountains to practice meditation. He developed the power of passing unhindered through soil, mountains, and rocks. Continuing his meditation, all of a sudden he understood the words of the Doctrines of all the vehicles (theg-pa, yāna) without the omission of a single word. This great master of yoga was endowed with many such outstanding achievements, and furthered numerous disciples in wisdom and virtuous deeds. He passed away at the age of seventy in the year 1195.

Zhig-po bDud-rtsi The spiritual son of lHa-rje lHa-khang-pa and Zhig-po of dBus was the Tulku (sprul-sku) Zhig-po bDud-rtsi. At his birth in 1149 at the hermitage of lHa-gdong, a rainbow descended upon him. His father, Sangs-rgyas-dags-chung, a well-known master of the Mahāyoga, died when Zhig-po was two, but before he died, he prophesied that this son would become responsible for the welfare of all living beings. When Zhig-po was thirteen, he gave away all his clothes to a wretched beggar, and at sixteen he took up residence with his uncle, Dam-pa Se-brag-pa, who had been a student of lHa-rje lHa-khang-pa. From his uncle, he heard the exposition of the Atiyoga according to the

method of Rong. Zhig-po then studied with another of Se-brag-pa's teachers, Yon-tan-bzungs of sKyil-mkhar-lha-khang monastery, who was the cousin of rGya-nag-pa and who succeeded him as abbot of sKyil-mkhar-lha-khang. Zhig-po stayed with Yon-tan-gzungs and mastered the twenty-four great Tantras of the Mind Section (Sems-sde) of the Atiyoga, and followed this system in all his studies and meditation practices.

At thirty, Zhig-po left his teacher and assumed the leadership of the hermitages of Se-brag, Chos-ldings, and others. His fortune increased; his mind shone like the sky and his compassion like the sun and moon, and he was surrounded by a multitude of disciples. Not once did he break his devotion to his teacher, for as he used to say, "Whenever I left the presence of my teacher, I was unable to take leave without placing his foot on my head." He gave generous offerings of religious and worldly gifts and presented his teacher seventeen precious copies of Sūtras, including Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras and others, all embossed in gold. As his generosity and insight increased, so did his mind become liberated. Having found methods of concentration based on the teachings of the Atiyoga, he became able to pass unhindered through mountains and rocks. Other stories tell of his faculty of prescience, his vanishing into a boulder while residing at the monastery of Da-lung of gZad-phu, and his passing unhindered through a mud wall on the Srin-po-ri River.

Zhig-po bDud-rtsi also visited the districts nestled between the snow-capped peaks to the north; he performed numberless deeds for the benefit of the Dharma, assisting with donations of materials used in the building of temples and healing the sick. He assisted the great Tripiṭaka masters, learned in the Sūtras and Tantras; he became the fulfillment of all the needs of numerous persons from India, China, Nepal, and other countries, who had gathered around him. In this way, he was similar to the Wish-Fulfilling Gem (Cintāmaṇi). Zhig-po bDud-rtsi passed away at the monastery of rGya-ra Gad-logs of gSang-phu in the year 1199. During the funeral rites, the earth shook and a lotus flower appeared in the sacred water set before his body, radiating rainbow light for three days.

rTa-ston Jo-yes Among Zhig-po's disciples, the one who obtained the essence of his knowledge was rTa-ston Jo-yes (1163–1230). His father, rTa-ston Jo-'bum, had received teachings as a youth, and had possessed trustworthy attendants and extensive landed property. One of Jo-'bum's principal teachers was Phag-mo-gru-pa. Feeling sadness for the

ways of the world, he sought out the doctrines of the Old Tantras and especially became learned in the basic text of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen), together with its oral precepts.

From his father and others rTa-ston Jo-yes received initiations into the Saṃvara system, sGyu-'phrul, the basic text of the sKor method of the Atiyoga, the method of the Mahāmudrā system (Phyag-rgya chen-mo), the Hevajra system, the 'Path and Fruit' (Lam-'bras), and the three cycles of Zhi-byed. He studied under astute teachers who imparted to him precious doctrines, rites of propitiation, and methods of meditative contemplation. At the age of twenty-four, he left lower Ngams-shod, and upon hearing the cycle of Vajrakīla, he practiced vigorous meditation.

At the age of twenty-five, rTa-ston Jo-yes met Zhig-po bDud-rtsi and stayed with the master for eleven years without parting from him for even a day. Recounting the effect his teacher had upon him, he once said, "Though the Dharmakāya was present in me, I had not recognized it. From eternity the nature of illusion is inconceivable. By reason of the awakening of my former deeds and through accumulated merit, I had the opportunity of meeting a perfect teacher, and of studying a little of the profound Tantric teachings. All my doubts concerning the nature of the Mind were removed in the presence of Zhig-po, who bestowed on me profound precepts handed down through four Spiritual Lineages, and which reflected the essence of the mind of this precious and matchless teacher."⁵

Throughout his life he felt deep devotion towards his teacher, and never grew tired of serving him and his monastery. He was endowed with great compassion, and without thinking about his personal benefit, he labored continually for the welfare of beings. In whatever he did, he was a king of yogins (rtogs-ldan), never separate from the direct perception of the ultimate (chos-nyid-kyi-rtogs-pa).

Upon the death of his teacher, rTa-ston Jo-yes renounced his worldly possessions. On four occasions he held religious assemblies in honor of Zhig-po bDud-rtsi; he recorded all the precepts and advice of his teacher, which greatly benefited later followers. Altogether there were thirteen teachers under whom he studied. Among them were six mūla-gurus (rtsa-ba'i-bla-ma), three of whom were of particular benefit to him, but the greatest and matchless one was Zhig-po Rin-po-che.

5. George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, I, p. 145 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976).

rTa-ston Jo-yes desired to behold the Dharma with the same clarity as his teacher Zhig-po, so he decided to practice his teachings in a country of forests and mountain valleys, unseen and unheard of by men. However, while he was casting a copper image of Avalokiteśvara in a foundry at Zung-mkhar, a yogic insight was born in him, and he suddenly obtained the extraordinary perception that all objective constituents belong to the sphere of the Ultimate (chos-nyid, dharmatā). From that time onward, he visited remote kingdoms and labored extensively for the welfare of all beings, until he passed away at the age of sixty-eight.

gYung-ston-pa Another significant line of the sGyu-'phrul arose with two disciples of the master sGro-sbug-pa, namely gTsang-pa Byi-ston and sGong-dri-ngas-pa Nye-ston Chos-kyi-seng-ge, who in turn passed the lineage on to gTsang-nag 'Od-'bar, Mes-ston-mgon-po, Bla-ma Sro, Zur Byams-pa-seng-ge, and then conjointly to 'Jam-dbyangs bSam-grub-rdo-rje (1295–1376) and gYung-ston-pa (1284–1365).

At an early age gYung-ston-pa (gYung-ston rDo-rje-dpal) was recognized for his brilliant mind, and each year his understanding of the Tantras grew substantially. After mastering the Abhidharma-samuccaya (mNgon-pa-kun-las-btus-pa), he studied the cycle of Yamāntaka (gShin-rje) and the method of yantra ('khrul-'khor). As a result of this, his psychic abilities magnified. While gYung-ston-pa was still in his youth, the emperor of China summoned him in order to produce rain for the drought-stricken villagers. Upon arriving in China, gYung-ston-pa prayed to the Triple Gem and rain began to fall. The emperor was greatly pleased and gave him many valuable gifts. Returning to Tibet, he offered all the gifts which he received to his teacher and monastic community. Several renowned teachers subsequently bestowed many precepts and doctrines upon him. Two of his principal teachers at this time were Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1284–1339), who was an important rNying-ma gTer-ston, and the learned scholar Bu-ston Rin-po-che (Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub-pa, 1290–1364). After gaining much insight into the Kālacakra and rDzogs-pa-chen-po, gYung-ston-pa traveled widely, transmitting the Dharma for the benefit of others. During his travels, he performed many wondrous acts, and often delineated the difference between the path to Buddhahood as described in the Sūtras and that described in the Tantras.

The Spiritual Line of gYung-ston-pa After the time of gYung-ston-pa, the lineages of the Mahāyoga became very complex, with multitudinous branches and arteries. To trace all the various branches is beyond the scope of this brief summary of the major rNying-ma lineages. However,



gYung-ston-pa

a few other major followers of the sGyu-'phrul particularly stand out during the period preceding Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa (1308–1364) and 'Gos lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal (1392–1481).

The principal disciple of the master gYung-ston-pa was gYag-ston-paṅ-chen rDo-rje-dpal, whose student was 'Jam-dbyangs bSam-grub-rdo-rje (1295–1376). bSam-grub-rdo-rje also received instruction from Zur Byams-pa-seng-ge and became outstanding in his knowledge of the sGyu-'phrul. He was taught by many of the masters of the direct lineage of 'Ug-pa-lung-pa, or the lineage following the Master Zur-chen-pa. He then concentrated his study on the sNying-thig teachings of the Atiyoga. Because of his highly refined mental development and meditative concentration, he gained the faculty of visiting Buddha-realms. On his deathbed, he said to his foremost disciple that he was going to Sukhāvātī

(bDe-ba-can, the Western paradise of Amitābha Buddha) and the disciple would join him there when he passed away, also at the age of eighty-two.

The receiver of this prophecy was Shangs-pa Kun-mkhyen, to whom bSam-grub-rdo-rje imparted all of his major lineages and teachings. This disciple was also known as Sangs-rgyas-rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzang-po (1350–1431). At the age of six, Sangs-rgyas-rin-chen memorized the entire text of the commentary to the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra. But when he came into the presence of a high lama, he forgot it. He again memorized the Tantra when he was eight. A year later, after studying ritual ceremony, his intrinsic understanding of the Dharma blossomed, and he began to act as a teacher and bestow empowerments.

Sangs-rgyas-rin-chen then requested his father to be allowed to study the Tantras of the gSar-ma class, but his father asked him, as he was the only son, to first marry and have children before taking monastic vows. So, he married at the age of twenty-four and his wife bore him six sons and two daughters. As he spent many years rearing his family, he was not able to be ordained until he was fifty-six. In his later life he wrote many commentaries to the Tantras, composed ritual texts, and taught others the methods of empowerment, including the Yamāntaka, Yang-dag, and Vajrakīla empowerments. Sangs-rgyas-rin-chen could recite by memory over forty texts of the Mahāyoga. For many years his principal teachers were Myang-nag mDo-po, a disciple of sGro-sbug-pa, and Myang's disciple, lHa-rje mNga'-seng-ge. Sangs-rgyas-rin-chen's chief disciple was the illustrious Chos-kyi-seng-ge.

Chos-kyi-seng-ge Also known as Ngog-thog-pa, Chos-kyi-seng-ge became very learned and attained spiritual realization. Once when he visited the Mongolian Emperor Se-chen (Qubilai), the emperor behaved towards him in a tyrannical manner, even ordering that he be sealed inside a Stūpa. At the end of a year, when the door of the Stūpa was opened, they found Chos-kyi-seng-ge inside, transformed into an image of Vajrakīla (rDo-rje-phur-bu). This caused such amazement that the emperor bestowed on him large gifts of costly silks and other precious materials.

Chos-kyi-seng-ge also received the spiritual lineage of Guru Padmasambhava and his consort Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal through a succession of twelve intermediate masters. This lineage, passing through Chos-kyi-seng-ge, continued its line of transmission through a succes-



Rig-'dzin Kumarāja

sion of more than eight masters, whereupon it spread throughout the central provinces and east Tibet.⁶

sMan-lung Śākya-'od, whose secret name was Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, studied the sGyu-'phrul and the Anuyoga (mDo) systems under Chos-kyi-seng-ge. He composed numerous texts and summaries, propagated the doctrine in Khams, and had a large following. 'Gos lo-t sā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal (1392–1481) received this spiritual lineage through two mas-

6. This succession includes: 'Bre A-tsar Sa-le, Lang-lab Byang-chub-rdo-rje, sNam Tshul-khri-m-she-s-rab, Khyung-po 'Chal-chen, 'Chal-chung, Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan, Ya-'brog-pa Gu-rub-yang-dag, 'Gos-ston Byang-'bar, Khyung-po-seng-ge, Khyung-po-khro-bo, and gNyal-ston-grags.



Rog Shes-rab-'od

ters, Zhang-mkhar-ba bSod-nams-bzang-po and his disciple, the Ācārya bDag-nyid-chen-po bKra-shis-rgya-mtsho.

Rog Shes-rab-'od The life of Rog Shes-rab-'od, another prominent figure in both the Mahāyoga (sGyu-'phrul) and the Anuyoga (mDo) lineages, exemplifies how magnificently interwoven the lineages of the Ancient Tantras became during the period of the later spread (phyi-dar). He received the sGyu-'phrul and mDo systems according to the method of So, Zur, and sKyo. His teachers in these systems are innumerable, many coming from the lineage of Zhig-po. He was also the receiver of countless precepts and esoteric instructions contained within the numerous spiritual transmissions under the gCod and Zhi-byed systems. Both of these systems contain lineages that weave in and out of the major esoteric lineages of the rNying-ma-pa.

Recognized by his contemporaries as a great scholar, Rog Shes-rab-'od composed an abridgement of the basic text of the 'Path and Fruit' (Lam-'bras) doctrine of the Mahāyoga system and a few important commentaries on the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra related texts. His expositions greatly facilitated the teachings of the Tantras and brought about a better understanding of their various empowerments. His spiritual line became known as the Lineage of Rog.

Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa The omniscient master, Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa (1308–1364) studied the Mahāyoga (sGyu-'phrul) and Anuyoga (mDo) systems from the lineage of Rog at the hamlet of Dan-bag near lHa-sa. His father was a member of the direct line of the lineage of Rog. Klong-chen-pa also received the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra from the lineage of the most learned Rong-zom Mahāpaṇḍita. Klong-chen-pa composed two works on these systems, the sPyi'i-khog-dbub-pa and the rGyud-kyi-rnam-bshad, basing their orientation on the precepts of the sNying-thig system.

The Later Mahāyoga Transmission Ten distinctive Mahāyoga lineages grew out of the rich soil of the Ancient Ones cultivated by the masters Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairotsana. The root lineages which pass through these three masters strengthened and multiplied with the great pillars known as So, Zur, gNubs, gNyags, rMa, and Rong: So Ye-shes-dbang-phyug, Zur Śākya-'byung-gnas, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, gNyags Jñānakumāra, rMa Rin-chen-mchog, and Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po.

The Mahāyoga is also distinguished by three significant stages of transmission, known as the bKa'-mchims-phu-ma, because they found their common origin at mChims-phu retreat center, which was located in a mountainous canyon several miles from bSam-yas monastery. These three important stages of transmission were kindled by the masters gNyags Jñānakumāra, gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, and Zur-po-che Śākya-'byung-gnas.

One of the principal preservers of the Mahāyoga texts, commentaries, and spiritual lineages in more recent times was Kaḥ-thog Siddha. Heir of a long line of distinguished masters of the Mahāyoga, he obtained full mastery of the over one hundred texts and commentaries of the Mahāyoga, some of which were written by Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa.

Kaḥ-thog Siddha Chos-kyi-rgya-mtsho was a disciple of the first 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po (b. 1820) and a teacher to his

incarnation, mKhyen-brtse Chos-kyi-blo-gros (the Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, b. 1893). Kaḥ-thog Siddha was essential to the transmission of rNying-ma lineages. Approximately eighty different disciple lineages pass through him, most of which were received by the Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po.

Through the Mahāyoga lineage of Kaḥ-dam-pa bDe-gshegs, over the course of several centuries some one hundred thousand followers of the Mahāyoga achieved the miraculous rainbow body ('ja-'lus), a phenomena which stands as a testimony to their enlightenment. This mystical occurrence, in which the bodily substance of the luminary is transformed into multi-hued light, has been observed to this day. For the practitioner of the Inner Tantras, particularly the Atiyoga sNying-thig, the moment of physical death is the climax of life. It is at this moment that the mind, totally liberated, experiences a horizon of beauty containing an infinite wealth of possibilities in what lies beyond.

The Lineage of the Anuyoga

The lineage of the mDo, or the Anuyoga (Lung-anuyoga'i-theg-pa) was propagated by Vajrapāṇi on the summit of Mount Malaya to an assembly of Vidyādhara (Rig-'dzin). After this, the Anuyoga was transmitted from mouth to ear among the Bodhisattvas of the earth. Through the blessings of Vajrapāṇi, rGyal-po-dzā had seven visions which initiated him into the meaning of the sacred texts of the Anuyoga. Altogether, there are five principal Anuyoga texts, the most important of which are the two root texts, the Mūla-tantra Kun-'dus-rig-pa'i-mdo and the bShad-rgyud mDo-dgongs-pa-'dus-pa. The Vidyādhara dGe-bsnyen Li-tsā-bi Dri-med-grags, after initiating the king into the essential teachings of the doctrine, fully explained its meaning orally. The king then preached this doctrine to his son Indrabodhi the Younger and, through a succession of teachers, the texts were transmitted to Dharmabodhi (Bodhidharma), and to Vasudhara. Eventually, they found their way to the territory of Bru-sha (Turkestan), where they were honored by the Abbot Ru-she bTsan-skyes.

The succession of teachers stemming from Indrabodhi begins with Ku-ku-rā-dza, who also received the lineage from the master through Na-ga-pu-tri and Ga-ya-su-tri. Ku-ku-rā-dza in turn gave the lineage to Ro-langs-bde-ba (Vetālakṣema) who was also known as dGa'-rab-rdo-rje. After reaching a high spiritual attainment (siddhi), Ro-lang-bde-ba edited

the rNal-'byor-rig-pa'i-nyi-ma, which teaches the profound path of the Buddha's Sūtras (mDo'i-zab-lam). His two disciples were Vajrahasya (rDo-rje-bzhad-pa) and Prabhāhasti, king of Za-hor. After Prabhāhasti received an empowerment (dbang-bskur) from his teacher at the banks of the River Sindhu, he entered the monastic order, receiving the name Śākya-'od. Of his students, the most noteworthy are Śākya-'od the younger, Śākya-bshes-gnyen, and Śākya-seng-ge. Śākya-bshes-gnyen, who attained vast knowledge of the Tantras, composed a commentary on the 'Dus-pa'i-mdo, which is also called the Ko-sa-la'i-rgyan because it came from the county of Kosala.

Dhanarakṣita learned the Sūtras from his teacher, Śākya-bshes-gnyen, and taught them in turn to Humkāra (rDo-rje-hūm-mdzad) in the Diamond cavern of Padmasambhava. After receiving instructions from Gaga Siddhi in the cavern of the Asuras on the border between India and Persia, Humkāra then wrote 107 commentaries to the Mula-tantra (rTsa-rgyud) as well as the rNal-'byor-pa'i-sgron-ma and other texts, and became a Vidyādhara. Sustaining himself by practicing a technique called 'taking the essential juices' (bcud-len), he eventually became invisible.

Humkāra's chief disciples were Sthiramati and Sukhaprasanna (bDe-ba-gsal-mdzad). Sukhaprasanna wrote a number of works, including the mDo'i-yig-sna-bco-brgyad-dang rnal-'byor-gyi-rim-pa-theg-chen-sgron-ma. He had four principal disciples to whom he imparted the teachings: Dharmabodhi of Magadha, who became a master of the Sūtras (mDo'i-mkhan-po) and composed mDo'i-don-bsdu-ba, Shes-rab sgron-ma, and bKol-mdo; Dharmarājapāla, who became the abbot of Nālandā University and received the oral explanation of the Tantras from bDe-ba-gsal-mdzad; Vasudhara, the king of Nepal, who also received teachings from Dharmarakṣita; and gTsug-lag-dpal-dge. bDe-ba-gsal-mdzad imparted to these four disciples the three aspects of the tradition: the Initiation (dbang-bka'), the Explanation (bshad-bka'), and the Guidance (man-ngag-bka').

The Upādhyāya from Bru-sha, Ru-she bTsan-skyes, invited Dhana-rakṣita to translate the mDo-dgongs-pa-'dus-pa'i-mdo. However, he was unable to complete his translation, and, returning to Nepal, entreated Vasudhara and Dharmabodhi to travel to Bru-sha to translate this work under the sponsorship of the Upādhyāya.⁷

7. Upādhyāyas are teachers instituted within the Sangha to guide new monks in manners and decorum.

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, who wrote a commentary on this work, was unsurpassed in spreading the Anuyoga throughout Tibet. He received the lineage of mDo principally from Dharmabodhi, Vasudhara, and Ru-she bTsan-skyes. Of his many writings, the one that stands foremost is his instruction concerning the Atiyoga, which is called the bSam-gtan-mig-sgron. Among the principal disciples of gNubs were sPa-gor Blon-chen-'phags-pa, Gru Legs-pa'i-sgron-ma, Ngan Yon-tan-mchog, So Ye-shes-dbang-phyug, and Khu-lung-pa Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho. Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho was the most noted of gNubs-chen's disciples, and transmitted the lineage to his son, Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho.

This lineage continued down to such notables as the Three Zur (Zur-rnam-pa-gsum), Mar-pa Lo-tsā-ba (1012–1097), Chos-kyi-blo-gros, and the brilliant O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa ('Gyur-med rDo-rje). This line of transmission has merged in many places with the Lineage of the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra (Mahāyoga).

One particular lineage, now rare, existed during the time of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, who received it from Padmasambhava through the transmission of the bKa'-mchims-phu-ma. This lineage textually bases itself on the commentary gNubs-chen wrote on the bShad-rgyud mDo-dgongs-pa-'dus-pa dictated to him by Padmasambhava. This is an essential practice-oriented text for the Anuyoga. During the long interim between gNubs-chen and Kaḥ-thog Kaḥ-dam-pa bDe-gshegs, the lineage of this practice-oriented instruction cannot be traced.

Kaḥ-thog Siddha recovered this text in the nineteenth century in an extraordinary way. He was able to perfectly reconstruct this important commentary through his intent contemplation on a statue of gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes that contained the precious bodily relics of the master. It is said that the statue, having become mystically animated, transmitted, from mouth to ear, the entire contents of the text to Kaḥ-thog Siddha, who then wrote it down. mKhan-chen Legs-bshad-'byor-ldan received this lineage of explanation from Kaḥ-thog Siddha and passed it on to mKhan-po Thub-dga' of dPal-sprul Rinpoche's lineage. He in turn imparted it to his niece, lHan-du-tsha-po, who transmitted it to Zhe-chen Kong-sprul (Padma-dri-med-legs-pa'i-blo-gros, b. 1901).

gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes is an essential link in the preservation of the rNying-ma lineages of Oral transmission and explanation of the esoteric treatises. Essentially, the entire transmission of bKa'-ma passes through him or his family-clan members. gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes not only was an important



gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-sbes

disciple of Padmasambhava, but learned numerous teachings and practices from Guru Rinpoche's mystic consort, Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal, who lived with gNubs-chen's family-clan for a few years during Glang Dar-ma's reign of suppression. gNubs-chen is said to have lived for a period covering nearly three generations, perhaps one hundred and ten years.

During King Ral-pa-can's reign, there were two types of Sangha—the Red Sangha and the White Sangha. The Red Sangha were fully ordained monks who wore red robes in formal assemblies; the White Sangha were generally yogis or householders who wore white robes in formal assembly and often had long hair. Most of the disciples of Padmasambhava were members of the family-clan lineage of the White Sangha. This trend toward full participation in Dharma practice by the lay community has remained a strong theme within the rNying-ma

school, in accord with the teaching that spiritual excellence and exemplary compassion can be practiced in all times and circumstances.

Because of Ral-pa-can's generous support of the Buddhist community, and because the king felt it would be beneficial to the people if the power of the throne were subordinated to religious authority, the Dharma became the source of social guidance. This way of ruling the country, so foreign to most rulers, caused bitter resentment in certain areas. So greatly did Ral-pa-can's half-brother, Glang Dar-ma, despise the king's support of the Sangha that after only a few years he arranged to have Ral-pa-can assassinated. Glang Dar-ma then secured power for himself by playing up to the Bon-po priests and shamans, who from ancient times had accepted the role of religious vassals to the king. In this way, Glang Dar-ma reestablished for a time the ancient hierarchy of king, priest, and shaman as a tripartite ruling body.

The reign of Glang Dar-ma was a time of great difficulty for the Sangha. So greatly did this malevolent usurper hate and resent the teachings and monastic community that he systematically persecuted it. Whenever he came upon a Buddhist statue, he commanded it to speak, and if it failed to do so, he ordered a nose or finger to be removed. These partially defaced statues existed for many centuries in the vicinity of central Lhasa, artifacts of this dark period for the Dharma in Tibet.

Glang Dar-ma ordered the execution of any monk, or member of the Red Sangha, who refused to conform to his edicts. However, he usually did not harm the White Sangha, for he identified them as householders, not monks. But on one occasion Glang Dar-ma journeyed well beyond the outskirts of the city to seek out gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-yeshes, who was the head of a distinguished White Sangha group. The king wished to investigate certain rumors that a very large and thriving Sangha community was preserving the sacred texts and oral transmission of the Dharma. Upon the king's arrival at the retreat center, gNubs-chen approached him without hesitation. He pointed in the direction of the king, and at once a flash of lightning burst from the tip of his finger. Next there appeared a scorpion the size of a yak. This display of magic so frightened the king that he promised not to make any further trouble for gNubs-chen's community. Glang Dar-ma then instituted an edict that no one was to torment or harm the community of gNubs.

During this period, numerous early translations of Dharma texts were saved by gNubs and his followers. Successive generations of gNubs-chen's family clan—siddhas, yogis, scholars, contemplatives, and

lay followers—preserved the Oral transmission and texts during the years when Buddhism was suppressed in central Tibet.

Rong-zom Mahāpaṇḍita Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po (1012–1088) was the recipient of numerous secret instructions, including the secret precepts of Padmasambhava transmitted through the spiritual lineage of sNa-nam rDo-rje-bdud-'joms and mKhar-chen dPal-gyi-dbang-phyug (disciples of Padmasambhava), and their disciples, who taught the precepts to Rong-zom's father, Rong-ban Rin-chen-tshul-khrims. Rong-zom also received the teachings of the lineage which originated with Vairotsana, beginning with rGyal-mo gYu-sgra-snying-po and continuing in the line of Bla-chen-po dGongs-pa-gsal, Grum-shing-gla-can, sNubs dPa'-brtan, Ya-zi Bon-ston, and finally to Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po. This is one of the Lineages of the 'Mind Section' (Sems-sde) of the Atiyoga teachings.

Rong-zom, who was born during the time of Zur-chung-pa (1014–1074) in the same valley of Khungs-rong on the border of lower gTsang, was accepted as being the incarnation of a great paṇḍita, though people disagreed as to whom. Some regarded him as an emanation of the Buddha; others, of Mañjuśrī. Atīśa met Rong-zom shortly after arriving in Tibet, and saw in his features the manifestation of his Indian guru, Nag-po-pa. Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po was considered by all a master and scholar of unparalleled depth and insight.

It is said that, while playing with other children, he would often recite by heart the teachings of his guru, Gar-ston Tshul-khrims-bzang-po, after having heard them only once. In his childhood, he was attracted to every learned teacher he met, and he learned to converse in several dialects. He studied all branches of knowledge and learned the contents of each text at a single reading. In this manner, he mastered the Sūtras, śāstras, and Tantras, being able to quote difficult texts without omitting a word. Well-versed in treatises on logic, medicine, poetry, the worldly and spiritual sciences, Sanskrit, and the science of linguistics, he also established a system of suitable Tibetan translations of many technical terms that occurred in the scholastic literature.

In his own writings, Rong-zom never contradicted the sacred texts, reason, or the explanations given him by his teachers, and he was considered irrefutable by other famous scholars of his time. A compassionate and effective teacher, Rong-zom guided many students in the methods and practices of the Vajrayāna and effected in them the subtle discoveries that lead to realization of the Mantrayāna path. Thus, it was



Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po

said, anyone who followed his guidance would surely be led to the most supreme teachings.

Many lo-tsā-bas and scholars attended Rong-zom's classes and considered him a true luminary of the Dharma. Once, while reading the text of the sGyu-'phrul-gsang-ba-snying-po (Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra), the root text of the Mahāyoga, Rong-zom said: "If we had the Sanskrit text to consult, this passage should be read thus. . . . But since none is available, we are helpless."

Go-rub Lo-tsā-ba dGe-slong Chos-kyi-shes-rab remembered these words, and later acquired the Sanskrit text. Upon studying it, he discovered that the text perfectly agreed with the interpretations of the master Rong-zom. Mar-pa Lo-tsā-ba Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug (1012–1096) was also a prominent student of Rong-zom.



Rang-'byung rDo-rje

In fulfillment of his teacher's wishes, Rong-zom composed three texts containing the secret precepts of his spiritual preceptors. He also composed various treatises, including the 'Precepts on the Theory and Meditative Practice of the All-Perfect Doctrine' (rDzogs-pa-chen-po'i-lta-sgom-man-ngag), several commentaries on the outer tantras, and translations of gSar-ma tantric texts.

During this period there was a doctrinal debate which was attended by scholars from the four districts of Tibet. Many of these teachers held the opinion that it was improper for persons born in Tibet to compose treatises. But after they had carefully examined Rong-zom's 'An Introduction to the System of the Mahāyoga', and had debated the subject matter with him, they became amazed at his erudition and natural intelligence and listened intently to his expositions of the precepts.

Rong-zom received another Atiyoga lineage through a siddha named A-ro Ye-shes-'byung-gnas, who possessed the secret precepts of the seventh link in the chain of the Indian lineage, as well as the precepts of the seventh link of the Chinese lineage of Hwa-shang. This Siddha passed this system on to Cog-ro Zangs-dkar-mdzod-khur and to Ya-zi Bon-ston; these two in turn taught it to Rong-zom. Taken together, this lineage is called the 'Lineage of the All-perfect Doctrine (rdzogs-chen) according to the Khams method'.

Rong-zom also received teaching from the lineage of Vimalamitra, who taught the secret precepts to Nyang Ting-nge-'dzin-bzang-po, as well as to rMa Rin-chen-mchog and gNyags Jñānakumāra. These two transmitted them through Khu Byang-chub-'od and Khyung-po dByig-'od to Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po. Thus, three hundred years after the arrival of Guru Rinpoche in Tibet, all the rNying-ma lineages, traditions, and influences again merged in Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po, and from him flowed the quintessence of the Three Inner Tantras (nang-rgyud-sde-gsum) according to the Khams tradition.

The Mind Section (Sems-sde) of the Atiyoga

The Mind Section (Sems-sde) of the Atiyoga teachings deals with the realization of the true nature of the mind. Sems-sde has eighteen different Tantras, initiations, sādhanas, and stages of realization through practice. Five precepts of this section originated with Vimalamitra and thirteen with Vairotsana. Vairotsana is thus the central figure in this transmission, as well as in the transmission of the 'Unending Experience of Being' (Klong-sde). These teachings were prominent among the Zur lineage (Zur-lugs-pa) as transmitted through a successive lineage stemming from Padmasambhava's disciples. Some of these teachings also come from India through direct transmissions between teacher and disciple.

In order to receive the transmission of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen) from Śrī Śimha, Vairotsana was sent by King Khri-srong-lde-btsan to Śrī Śimha's home in the sandalwood forest near Dhanakośa Lake in the land of Uḍḍiyāna. After displaying his various psychic powers to the Yoginī who was guarding Śrī Śimha's nine-storied pagoda, Vairotsana was granted admittance. Presenting numerous gifts, he begged to be instructed in the Higher Tantras; Śrī Śimha, after due consideration, agreed to explain to him the secret, sealed, and profound aspects of the doc-

trine. But, because the king of that region had forbidden the spread of such teachings at the threat of death, Śrī Simha suggested that Vairotsana study the accepted philosophical doctrines with the other paṇḍitas during the day and study Atiyoga secretly with him at night. Śrī Simha wrote the Atiyoga teachings with goat's milk onto a white cloth; he then instructed Vairotsana to hold these invisible letters over smoke in order to make them visible. In this way, the teachings were passed on, and yet their secrecy continued to be guarded.

In addition to these eighteen Instructions, Śrī Simha transmitted to Vairotsana the Section of the Unending Experience of Being (Klong-sde), in the three traditional manners: 'black', 'white', and 'multicolored' (nag, dkar, khra). Śrī Simha also taught him the Guidance Section (Man-ngag-gi-sde), as well as the initiations (dbang-bskur) and instructions (man-ngag) in the sixty Tantra Sections (rgyud-sde). After Vairotsana perfectly mastered all these doctrines, Śrī Simha taught him the three ways that instruction is to be sought, the four ways it is to be transmitted, and the four ways it is not to be transmitted.

Later, in a meditative vision, Vairotsana received instructions from dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, the first human transmitter of the Atiyoga teachings. Directly perceiving these teachings (via the Shorter Lineage), Vairotsana attained Nirvāṇa. Then, practicing the art of meditative speed running (rkang-mgyogs), he returned to Tibet, where he strictly adhered to the guidance of his teachers.

After instructing King Khri-srong-lde-btsan in the Atiyoga, Vairotsana taught the Sems-sde on three occasions in Khams. first he transmitted it to rGyal-mo gYu-sgra-snying-po, who belonged to the monastery rGyal-rong Brag-la-mgon, in the meditative retreat of the Natha on the rock of rGyal-mo-rong. Then he taught it to gSang-ston Ye-shes-bla-ma at the hermitage of sTag-rtse-mkhar of Tsha-ba-rong. He then transmitted the teachings to the mendicant Sangs-rgyas-mgon-po at the settlement of Brag-dmar-rdzong of sTong-khung-rong. At a later time, having gone to dBus in central Tibet, he taught it to the Tibetan queen from Khotan, Li-bza' Shes-rab-sgron-ma. He also translated the Sems-sde-snga'-gyur.

gNyags Jñānakumāra, who was born in Yar-lung Valley to sTa-sgra-lha-srang of gNyags and to Sru-gza' sGron-ma-skyid, studied with Vairotsana and gYu-sgra-snying-po on five occasions. He also studied the 'later' transmission with Vimalamitra. Thus, the four great streams of the highest doctrine came together: the stream of the extensive explanation of basic texts together with an abridged commentary; the stream of the



gNyags Jñānakumāra

precepts of Oral instructions together with primary notes; the stream of Blessing and Empowerment together with the Exposition of Method and Guidance; and the stream of Practice and Abstinent Method together with the mantras which Protect the Sacred Precepts. gNyags Jñānakumāra taught the instructions to Sog-po dPal-gyi-ye-shes and numerous disciples, and from Sog-po the transmission passed to gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes through the lineage of Zur, and then to sGro-sbug-pa.

***The Section of the Unending Experience
of Being (Klong-gi-sde) of the Atiyoga***

Each of the four divisions of the Klong-sde section of the Atiyoga teachings develops meditative awareness so that whatever is reflected in

the clarity and vastness of the mind becomes radiant. All the Tantras, teachings, sādhanas, and practices of this section are internally experienced as a natural and self-created movement towards the higher reality of Being.

Among the texts belonging to the Section of the Unending Experience of Being (Klong-sde) is the rDo-rje-sems-dpa'-nam-mkha'i-mtha'-dang-mnyam-pa'i-rgyud-chen-po, which contains nine 'spheres' (klong) of subject matter. These nine spheres are (1) the Sphere of the Doctrine (lTa-ba'i-klong); (2) the Sphere of Practice (sPyod-pa'i-klong); (3) the Sphere of the Maṇḍala (dKyil-'khor-gyi-klong); (4) the Sphere of Empowerment (dBang-gi-klong); (5) the Sphere of the Vow (Dam-tshig-gi-klong); (6) the Sphere of Meditation (sGrub-pa'i-klong); (7) the Sphere of Action (Phrin-las-kyi-klong); (8) the Sphere of the Path and Stages (Sa-lam-gyi-klong); and (9) the Sphere of the Result ('Bras-bu'i-klong).

The Klong-sde teachings originated with Vairotsana, who bestowed the precepts of rDo-rje-zam-pa ('The Teaching of the Diamond Bridge') on sPangs Mi-pham-mgon-po according to various lineages, including that of Ye-shes-gsang-ba. Though sPangs Mi-pham-mgon-po did not practice meditation as a youth, in his old age he began to practice with the aid of a meditative cord and chin support which kept his ailing body erect. Following his teacher's advice, he perceived the meaning of non-origination and lived for over a hundred years.

sPangs Mi-pham's chief disciple was the monk Ngan-lam Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, who at age sixty-seven received instructions from him. Ngan-lam's principal disciple was Za-gnam Rin-chen-dbyig, a native of upper A-mdo, who remained with him on the Wa-seng-ge ('Fox and Lion') Rock. The lineage then passed to Chos-kyi-khu-'gyur gSal-ba'i-mchog of Yar-lung, who obtained instructions from Za-ngam as a monk of fifty-seven years of age.

These three masters all passed away in the same year on the rock of Wa-seng-ge, their bodies vanishing like mist or a rainbow ('ja'-lus). Ngan-lam Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan was one hundred and seventy-two; Za-ngam was one hundred and forty-four; and Khu-'gyur was one hundred and seventeen years of age.

Chos-kyi-khu-'gyur's chief disciple was the monk Myang Byang-chub-grags, a native of upper gYu-'brug, who received instructions from him at age forty-two. Later, he resided at bSam-yas mChims-phu, where he met an elderly monk named Myang Shes-rab-'byung-gnas, to whom



sPangs Mi-pham

he also bestowed the lineage of teachings. While Myang Byang-chub-grags was residing on the great mountain of Phung-po in rGya-ma Ne'u-kha in gTsang, his body was once seen disappearing above the slope of the mountain, like a cloud scattering in the wind.

Myang Shes-rab-'byung-gnas's disciple was the Ācārya sBa-sgom, a native of Lo-mo and a member of the sBa clan. His parents had entrusted him to Myang Shes-rab when he was sixteen to protect him from a civil war in his native country. While teacher and student were together, Myang Byang-chub visited them, leading a deer, and because of this he received the epithet 'Myang with a Deer'.

When Shes-rab-'byung-gnas and sBa-sgom came to Phug-po-che, Myang Byang-chub-grags disappeared and then transformed himself into a whirlwind which whirled around and then transformed itself into a

fire. He then transformed himself into water and filled a brass bowl used in offerings. Continuing such exhibitions of miraculous powers until dusk, he suddenly assumed his own form and explained that so long as the gross elements are not purified and the fine elements do not disappear, such phenomena cannot take place. But if one understands the object which cannot be meditated upon and is able to practice without distraction, such power as was demonstrated is not difficult to attain.

Once the Ācārya sBa-sgom had a female disciple named Gang-mo. On one occasion he told her that he did not believe visual objects had a true existence. He struck a water stone with his hand, and his arm penetrated the stone up to his elbow. He pulled his body backward and it entered a rock; the trace of his body could be clearly seen afterwards.

Late in his life, Shes-rab-'byung-gnas instructed sBa-sgom, "In my absence, gaze on the summit of Lha-ri." Later when Shes-rab-'byung-gnas did not return from a walk on the mountain, sBa-sgom discovered that the teacher had passed away without leaving a trace of his body behind. Only his garments, hat, and rosary made of peepul wood were found, hanging on a juniper tree.

When sBa-sgom was residing at the small cave of Zu-ra-ri, 'Dzeng Dharmabodhi (1052–1168) came to visit him and recognized him as a superior master. sBa-sgom told 'Dzeng that he possessed a secret precept called the rDo-rje-zam-pa, the understanding of which, for only a single moment, results in enlightenment in this very life. He explained that the rDo-rje-zam-pa had been transmitted through an uninterrupted lineage of teachers who attained the 'rainbow body'. sBa-sgom, who had until then kept these teachings as his most precious secret, bestowed on 'Dzeng Dharmabodhi the four complete initiations of the Path of Liberation, as well as the complete secret precepts.

Thereafter, 'Dzeng Dharmabodhi learned many teachings as he wandered in the company of prominent yogins; he also attracted numerous students, both male and female siddhas. He attained the power of transforming his body into a spherical rainbow, and could cover great distances within a single moment. After receiving the secret instructions from sBa-sgom, his mind merged with the sky, and all objects that he perceived were no longer beset by the claims of dualism. He practiced the 'Six Doctrines of Nāropa' imparted by the Ḍākinī Ni-gu-ma, especially the method of dreams (rmi-lam) and the methods of the Mahāmudrā. Later in his life, he had a vision of Amitābha Buddha and came to understand many highly guarded precepts.

On one occasion, having reached the great town of Mon-'gar, which stood on a freshly frozen river, 'Dzeng thought that it would be safe to cross the ice, but the ice broke under him and he fell into the water. His body entered the freezing water, sizzling like a red-hot iron, and then a column of vapor ascended into the sky. The onlookers could not understand how anyone could stand the ice-cold water. His only response to this was, "I felt cold, of course."

'Dzeng was known especially for his many miraculous deeds and austere practices, and lived until the age of one hundred and seventeen. From the time of 'Dzeng Dharmabodhi on, the oral instructions of rDo-rje-zam-pa have been practiced widely. His chief disciple was 'Dzeng Jo-sras, who, early in life, sought the teachings from many masters. Three times he sought the rDo-rje-zam-pa instructions from 'Dzeng and was finally granted them. After this, whenever other disciples asked for the teachings, Jo-sras taught from the teacher's seat. 'Dzeng and Jo-sras worked together for eighteen years. The Ācārya Kun-bzang was a disciple of both 'Dzeng Dharmabodhi and 'Dzeng Jo-sras, and heard the text of the rDo-rje-zam-pa a total of thirty-five times. The Ācārya was known for his ceaseless meditation, and he set forth detailed interpretations of the basic texts to numerous disciples, including the teacher So-ston, who composed a commentary on the rDo-rje-zam-pa. Thus, the precepts of the rDo-rje-zam-pa, which originated with Vairotsana, have been transmitted through a continuous series of enlightened teachers of the rNying-ma lineage.

The Transmission of the Guidance Section (Man-ngag-sde) of the Atiyoga

The transmission of the Guidance Section (Man-ngag-sde) was first received by dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, the Nirmāṇakāya emanation of Vajrasattva (rDo-rje-sems-dpa') and the first of the Human tradition of Vidyādhara (Rig-'dzin). The successor to dGa'-rab-rdo-rje was 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen, who in turn transmitted the teachings to Śrī Śirīha. Śrī Śirīha also received the transmission directly from dGa'-rab-rdo-rje in the form of meditative visions. He was the teacher of Ye-shes-mdo (Jñānasūtra), Buddhaguhya (Sangs-rgyas-gsang-ba), Vimalamitra, and Vairotsana.

In this line of transmission, Padmasambhava is the first lama, as he is the living exemplar of the profound meaning of Buddhahood, and is coincident with its three manifestation patterns—the Dharmakāya



Sangs-rgyas gSang-ba

(Chos-sku), Sambhogakāya (Klong-sku), and Nirmāṇakāya (sPrul-sku). Guru Rinpoche's principal teachers in this line of mystical instruction—known more specifically as the mKha'-'gro-snying-thig—were Śrī Simha and 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen.

Padmasambhava demonstrated these teachings at the court of King Khri-srong-lde-btsan by bringing back to life his daughter lHa-lcan Padma-gsal, his child by 'Brog-bza' Byang-chub-sgron. Padmasambhava went to the dead child and wrote symbols on the girl's chest with red chalk dust. With intense meditative concentration, Guru Rinpoche brought the girl back to life. He then imparted to her an empowerment (dbang-bskur) for the Man-ngag-mkha'-'gro'i-snying-thig. The Guru then concealed the precious sNying-thig teachings in a secret place, establishing their existence as gTer-ma or 'buried treasure'. In the spatio-



Padmasambhava

temporal world this transmission ends with Padmasambhava, but it continues in the transworldly sphere through Bodhisattvas and enlightened beings. These teachings are thus preserved for future times by beings endowed with spiritual inspiration, such as *Dākinīs* (*mkha'-'gro-ma*) and masters of *gTer-ma*.

The Transmission of the Central Doctrine of the Guidance Section

At a time well before his journey to Tibet, Vimalamitra, accompanied by *Ye-shes-mdo* (*Jñānasūtra*), received a vision of *Vajrasattva*. In this vision, he received precise instructions to go to the temple near *Byang-*

chub-zhing in China and to study with Śrī Śimha, if he wished to attain Buddhahood in this very life.

Vimalamitra studied with Śrī Śimha for a period of twenty years, during which time he learned the Transmission of the Central Doctrine of the Guidance Section (rDzogs-chen Man-ngag-snying-thig), and other highly treasured instructions. Upon his return to India, Vimalamitra met Ye-shes-mdo and related to him what he had learned during his long stay with the teacher of the Vidyādhara Tantras. Upon Vimalamitra's suggestion, Ye-shes-mdo proceeded to the temple in China where Śrī Śimha was residing. Due to his knowledge of meditative speed running (rkang-gyogs), he covered the nine month's journey in a single day. He then studied the Guidance Section with Śrī Śimha for sixteen years.

One day, on hearing a peculiar sound, Ye-shes-mdo looked up and saw Śrī Śimha sitting in the sky, encircled by a halo of light. The master was passing away, but before he did so he gave Ye-shes-mdo the book gZer-bu-bdun-pa, which contained instructions for the attainment of non-duality and directed him to seek out the fourth division of the Guidance Section in a pillar of the bKra-shis-khri-gso temple.

Ye-shes-mdo then took up residence in the Bha-shing cemetery, where he imparted to Vimalamitra the Atiyoga: its relevant texts and oral instructions. Vimalamitra proceeded to the city of Bhir-ya-la in western India, where King Dharmapāla welcomed him with a religious festival. He then traveled to a burial ground north of this city called Rab-tu-snang-byed, where he practiced the 'Quintessential Instructions' (sNying-thig-gi-gdams-pa), the absolutely subtle doctrinal precepts leading to perfect attainment. Vimalamitra stayed there for thirteen years; as a result he obtained an immutable body and displayed numerous miraculous deeds. Following this, Vimalamitra traveled to Kapilavastu where he taught King Indrabodhi, and where he stayed until he reached the age of two hundred.

Upon invitation by King Khri-srong-lde-btsan, the highly respected master and comprehensive scholar Vimalamitra traveled to Tibet. After his acceptance by the nobility, he took the seat of honor in the Translation Hall at bSam-yas monastery and proceeded to translate the exoteric and esoteric treatises from Sanskrit into Tibetan.

Vimalamitra resided in Tibet for thirteen years, during which time he worked in close collaboration with Padmasambhava and Vairotsana. These three distinguished masters were the prime translators of the

rDzogs-pa-chen-po texts and were central to their associated lineages of oral transmission. Vimalamitra went to a mountain retreat, Ri-bo-rtse-Ingā (Wu-ta'i-shan) near the borders of China, where he passed away, his body vanishing into a rainbow. Numerous Tibetan masters, after pursuing the practices detailed in the works of Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, attained unusual powers and left behind no physical remains at death.

Before he proceeded to Ri-bo-rtse-Ingā, Vimalamitra imparted the precepts of the sNying-thig to King Khri-srong-lde-btsan and Nyang Ting-nge-'dzin-bzang-po, who had been the king's playmate. Nyang founded Zhwa'i-lha-khang, in which he hid the precepts of the sNying-thig. Nyang Ting-nge-'dzin became an important figure during the king's reign (755–797) and a prominent supporter of the growing Buddhist Sangha. At the age of fifty-five (c. 836) he was executed by Glang Dar-ma because he would not discontinue his Buddhist practices. On the day after his execution, rainbows appeared in the sky and natural miracles were observed to the amazement of all.

Nyang Ting-nge-'dzin-bzang-po taught the 'Lineage of Words' (tshig-brgyud) to 'Brom Rin-chen-'bar, who in turn taught them to sBas Blo-gros-dbang-phyug. Sometime later, Nyang's hidden precepts were discovered and practiced by lDang-ma lHun-rgyal, who transmitted the instructions to the noted rJe-btsun Seng-ge-dbang-phyug from upper Nyang, and bestowed on him the seven degrees of these mystic precepts. rJe-btsun, in turn, bestowed the precepts on Nyang bKa'-gdams-pa, who then meditated on the rock of Ti-sgro of gZo ('Little Lake') and passed away, vanishing like a rainbow. rJe-btsun resided in the mountain range between Shang and 'U-yug, practiced meditation, and obtained miraculous powers. He hid the precepts in three secret locations: 'U-yug, Lang-gro'i-'chad-pa-ltag, and Jal-gyi-phu.

Thirty years later, rJe-sgom Nag-po discovered and practiced these hidden precepts. Sangs-pa-ras-pa also discovered these hidden treasures and taught them to others. Still later, when Zhang bKra-shis-rdo-rje (rGyal-ba-zhang-ston, 1097–1167) was residing at Upper Nyang, the Bodhisattva Vajrasādhu appeared to him and guided him to the summit of a high rock in the western mountains of 'U-yug. There, in a cave facing north, he discovered teachings hidden by rJe-btsun. He also discovered the teachings hidden at Jal-gyi-phu, and the treasures hidden by Vimalamitra himself in the rock of mChims-phu. These he taught



Nyang Ting-nye-'dzin bzang-po

extensively to all who requested his private instructions. He also obtained the secret precepts directly from rJe-sgom himself.

Zhang bKra-shis-rdo-rje's son, mKhas-pa-nyi-'bum (1158–1213), studied with his father for eleven years, as well as with several other teachers, most notably Sa-skya Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan. Having completed the study of the sNying-thig, he composed a śāstra titled Tshig-don-chen-mo ('The Great Meaning of Words').

mKhas-pa-nyi-'bum's son, Gu-ru Jo-'ber (1196–1231), as a youth listened to the complete precepts of the sNying-thig. At age eighteen he received instructions from the Sa-skya Paṅ-chen, the Saṁvara Cycle, and the precepts of the Mahāmudrā. Shortly after completing his studies at the age of thirty-six, he had visions of Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara



sGrub-chen Me-long-rdo-rje

surrounded by a halo of light; later he had a vision of Amitāyus, and passed away soon afterward.

'Khrul-zhig Seng-ge-rgyal-pa received the complete secret precepts of the sNying-thig from Gu-ru Jo-'ber. He also obtained many precepts of the Old and New Tantras, in Mahāmudrā and the Zhi-byed systems, and for many years earnestly practiced meditation in hermitages and uninhabited valleys. He led many worthy disciples on the path of empowerment and guidance.

'Khrul-zhig's principal disciple was sGrub-chen Me-long-rdo-rje (1243–1303), who obtained the faculty of prescience at an early age. During his youth he received teachings from a number of well-known masters. When he was eighteen, Seng-ge-dbon-po transmitted the sNying-thig doctrine to him at Seng-ge-rgyab; thereafter, he had a con-

tinuous vision of Vajrasattva for six days and nights. During the initiation ceremony, he received the blessing of the preceptors of his spiritual lineage in the form of a dream. A few years later he became the recipient of many hidden treatises (gter-chos), such as the Vajravārāhī (rDo-rje-phag-mo), from Sangs-rgyas-ras-pa. He was blessed by numerous illuminating visions, including those of Vajrasattva, Vajravārāhī, Hayagrīva, Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Tārā, the paṇḍita Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava, Za-lung-pa, Sangs-rgyas-ras-pa, and 'Gro-mgon Rinpoche, all enveloped within a sphere of multi-hued light.

Me-long-rdo-rje's principal disciple was Rig-'dzin-chen-po Ku-ma-rā-dza (Kumarāja, 1266–1343), who was the teacher of Klong-chen-pa and the young incarnate lama, Rang-'byung-rdo-rje. From childhood, Rig-'dzin-pa showed great wisdom, naturally understanding how to read and write. At the age of seven he was initiated into the Hevajra and Saṃvara systems, and at nine, into the Cycle of Avalokiteśvara according to the rNying-ma-pa system. He later received the ordination name of gZhon-nu-rgyal-po and studied the Vinaya, the Six Doctrines of Nāropa, and other systems with the teacher Grags-se-ba. He also studied painting and became a famous artist, and later obtained many precepts, instructions, and Tantras of the rNying-ma-pa from Khyung-ma Śāk-dar.

Rig-'dzin-chen-po Ku-ma-rā-dza obtained from Me-long-rdo-rje an exposition of the Mahāmudrā and attained yogic insight through identifying his mind with the teaching. In a dream Ku-ma-rā-dza conversed with Padmasambhava who instructed him secretly; he then proceeded to mTshur-phu monastery and studied the Kar-ma-pa doctrines with Lama gNyan-ras and Dar-ma-mgon-po. Afterwards, he met the Mahāsiddha U-rgyan-pa and Rang-'byung-rdo-rje, who was already a monk at the age of seven. From the Mahāsiddha he obtained many precepts, and from gNyan-ras he received complete instruction in the sNying-thig doctrine, along with many teachings of the rDzogs-chen, including the 'Mirror of the Hidden Main Point' (gSang-ba-gnad-kyi-me-long). Then at mKhar-chu, he obtained a full empowerment of the sNying-thig, together with the expositions and oral instructions from Me-long-rdo-rje. Later, at mTshur-phu, he offered the precepts of sNying-thig to Rang-'byung-rdo-rje. From the Ācārya sGom-pa, of the lineage of rJe-sgom Nag-po, he obtained the gSang-skor and the bSam-gtan-mig-gi-sgron-me ('The Lamp of the Eye of Meditation'). Rig-'dzin-chen-po Ku-ma-rā-dza taught skillfully the theory of sNying-thig with the help of terminology unique to that system, meditated in distant hermitages and mountain retreats, and passed away at the age of seventy-eight.

Klong-chen-pa Kun-mkhyen Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa (Dri-med-'od-zer) is one of the most important figures in the entire rDzog-chen lineage, for he ordered the philosophical truths and psychological applications of the rDzogs-chen into a cohesive system. He was a descendant on his father's side of the spiritual lineage of Rog Shes-rab-'od, whose ancestry goes back to Ye-shes-dbang-po-srung of the clan of Rog, one of the seven monks (sad-mi-bdun) ordained by Śāntarakṣita. He is also related to the clan of rGyal-ba mChog-dbyangs, one of Guru Padmasambhava's twenty-five foremost disciples, who gained mastery in the Hayagrīva Sādhana (Padma-gsung) and who incarnated as Dusgsum-mkhyen-pa, the greatest disciple of sGam-po-pa. From his mother, 'Brom gZa'-ma bSod-nams-rgyan, he was of the ancestral lineage of 'Brom-ston-pa ('Brom-ston rGyal-ba'i-'byung-gnas, 1005–1064), Atīśa's foremost Tibetan disciple.

Early in life, Klong-chen-pa studied many doctrines, including the 'Five Doctrines of Maitreya' and Dharmakīrti's 'Seven Treatises', and became noted for his complete comprehension and accurate explanation of these texts. Among his peers he became known as 'the one who knows many verses' because of his vast knowledge of the Sūtras.

In 1319, Klong-chen-pa received ordination at bSam-yas monastery in the presence of the Abbot bSam-grub-rin-chen and the Lama Kun-dga-'od-zer, at which time he was given the name Tshul-khrims-blo-gros. He spent the next several years studying intensively with the most renowned teachers of his day. In addition to completely mastering the rNying-ma tradition, he also studied with Rang-'byung-rdo-rje (1284–1339) and with Bla-ma-dam-pa bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan (1312–1375), both of whom presented to him the 'New (gSar-ma) Tradition'. Due to his unbounded knowledge, he received the appellations Ngag-gi-dbang-po of bSam-yas and Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa, which he used as signatures for some of his works.

Although he was abbot of bSam-yas monastery early in his life, he retired from monastic duties to live simply in the mountains of Tibet. Throughout his life, he had innumerable visions of Bodhisattvas and enlightened masters. In his late twenties Klong-chen-pa experienced a vision of Padmasambhava and his consort Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal, in which he received the name Dri-med-'od-zer from Padmasambhava and the name rDo-rje-gzi-brjid from Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal. During this same period he began to study and practice the mKha'-'gro-snying-thig, mystical teachings connected with Padmasambhava that had a profound effect on



Klong-chen-pa

his spiritual development. Later he composed a work in a similar vein, the mKha'-'gro-yang-tig.

After spending five months secluded in the dark chambers of a cave, he journeyed to bSam-yas and met the person who would become his chief teacher, Rig-'dzin-chen-po Ku-ma-rā-dza. Upon meeting Klong-chen-pa, Rig-'dzin told him: "Last night I dreamt that a wonderful heavenly bird had arrived, indicating your coming. You are the holder of the spiritual lineage of my Doctrine, and the complete secret precepts will be given to you." After this meeting, they stayed together for some time, changing residence nine times during one spring and traveling from one uninhabited valley to another. Klong-chen-pa endured many hardships and austerities, practicing meditation in caves and hermitages such as mChims-phu, and receiving the secret instructions from Rig-'dzin-pa.



Ye-shes mtsbo-rgyal

When the snow fell, he covered himself only with a woolen bag that during the day he used for a mat. In the presence of his teacher, he unerringly revised and synthesized the precepts, and exhibited an unsullied lucidity in the three disciplines of teaching, debating, and writing; he also authored a number of translations, commentaries, and original treatises.

Me-long-rdo-rje (1243–1303) had transmitted to Ku-ma-rā-dza Vimalamitra's teachings, which had been summed up in the Bi-ma-snying-thig and rediscovered by lDang-ma lHun-rgyal. Ku-ma-rā-dza, who was himself an embodiment of Vimalamitra, passed these teachings to Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa, who elaborated on them in his Bla-ma-yang-tig and then synthesized the contents of both the mKha'-'gro-yang-tig and the Bla-ma-yang-tig into his most profound Zab-mo yang-



Mandāravā

fig. Despite the depth and complexity of the subjects to which Klong-chen-pa addressed himself, his presentations were exceptionally clear and understandable.

In the course of his life, Klong-chen-pa authored a total of 263 works, only about twenty-five of which are still extant. These texts present a unified account of the entire range of Buddhist teaching and practice, for Klong-chen-pa had received teachings from gurus belonging to both the rNying-ma and gSar-ma traditions. His treatises on the rDzog-chen system are the most profound, enduring, and poetic ever written, and his works taken as a whole are the most brilliant and original treatises in all of Tibetan literature. Klong-chen-pa became a master of logical organization and clarity of expression.



Śākyadevi

Among his shorter works are the 'Three Triple Cycles' (Ngal-gso skor-gsum, Rang-grol-skor-gsum, and Mun-sel-skor-gsum), which emphasize the intrinsic freedom underlying all spiritual growth and the release and relief discovered in the proper concentration of one's being through meditation. All of Klong-chen-pa's writings are inspired by the teachings revealed by him in the 'Seven Treasures' (mDzod-bdun) and the sNying-thig-ya-bzhi, which comprise the quintessence of rNying-ma philosophy and psychology.

Klong-chen-pa composed several liturgical texts for the performance of important offering ceremonies (pūjā), instructional texts for the practice of Atiyoga meditation, poetical accounts of experiences of esoteric realizations, devotional pieces for use in regular religious practice, literary texts outlining higher meditative practice, works illustrating



Kālasiddhī

the principles of Tibetan poetics, didactic stories in verse, poetical texts in praise of various Bodhisattvas, and a general history of Buddhism (chos-'byung) and its essential teachings and sādhanas.

Due to his affiliation with the opponents of the ascendant ruling power, Klong-chen-pa was forced into a decade of wandering retreat in Bhutan. However, even this he turned into fortune, for during this sojourn, he founded the monasteries of Thar-pa-gling, near Bum-thang (Bhutan), and Shar-mkho-thing Rin-chen-gling and bSam-gtan-gling in Spa-gro. From Bhutan, the rNying-ma teachings later spread to Nepal.

In his travels he restored a number of other monasteries and retreat centers throughout Tibet and Bhutan. He was instrumental in founding or restoring the monastic settlements of lHa-ring-brag, O-rgyan-rdzong,



bKra-shis Khye-dren

and Zhwa'i-lha-khang. His principal accomplishment, however, was the restoration of bSam-yas monastery, the first teaching center in Tibet and the site of the extensive translation work completed during the early spread of the Dharma.

Klong-chen-pa was finally allowed to return to Tibet at the time the Phag-mo-gru Dynasty rose to power. But before his return he expounded the sNying-thig to many disciples who had assembled near the river banks of sKyid-chu in Upper dBu-ru.

It was at this time that he was honored with the title of Kun-mkhyen, which means 'The Omniscient One'. He is also revered as one of the three incarnations of Mañjuśrī and as the direct emanation of Vimalamitra. Having taught and given initiation into the higher esoteric teachings to over forty thousand students at one time, he received the



Nyang-ral Nyi-ma-'od-zer

title 'The Mañjuśrī of Tibet'. Through his instruction, many of his disciples attained enlightenment.

Klong-chen-pa spent his last years repairing the Stūpas near bSam-yas monastery and meditating in the cave at mChims-phu, which was formerly used by Padmasambhava. When Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa was fifty-six years old, he gave his students his final teachings and passed away at his beloved O-rgyan-rdzong in Gangs-ri-thod-kar.

Many marvelous occurrences heralded that occasion, and the air was filled with music. People who were in their homes thought that the music was coming from outside, and people who were outdoors thought that the music was coming from inside the houses. When his students retrieved the relics from his ashes, they found substances of the five rainbow colors which were as hard as diamonds. Because it was the



Guru Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug

depth of winter, ice and snow covered the entire countryside, but at the place where Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa passed away, the snows melted and flowers blossomed.

The rDzogs-chen teachings gained greater clarity and impact through the poetic, philosophical, and deeply experiential language utilized by Klong-chen-pa. His oral teachings have been preserved to this day, having passed through O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa (1646–1714) and 'Jigs-med-gling-pa (1729–1798), two foremost rDzogs-chen masters. They were further transmitted to dPal-sprul Rinpoche (b. 1808), Lama Mi-pham (1848–1912), A-'dzom 'Brug-pa, the Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po (Chos-kyi-blo-gros, b. 1893), 'Gyur-med-rdo-rje (A-'dzom rGyal-sras 'Gyur-med-rdo-rje, b. 1895), and mChog-sprul Rinpoche (Dar-thang mChog-sprul Chos-kyi-zla-ba, b. 1893).



Bla-ma Rig-'dzin

gTer-ma, the Concealed Treasures

The term *gter* refers to anything that is precious or worthy of preservation. In essence, a *gter* can be anything that, when it is rediscovered, induces in an individual the highest aspiration for enlightenment. In addition to texts or fragments of manuscripts, *gter* can take the form of religious figurines, reliquaries, or ritual objects, denoting anything that stands for spiritual value. *gTer* may also manifest as natural objects, such as trees, rocks, and signs in the earth; *gter* can also be gifts of silver, gold, or precious jewels which may be exchanged for materials needed to build a temple or other religious monument.

Padmasambhava formulated eighteen classes of *gTer-ma*, which include innumerable forms of *gter*. The content of a single *gTer-ma* work



Jam-dpal-sku (gshin-rje)

summarizes the quintessence of the Buddha's teachings as they find their practical application in the Inner Tantras. Because they are particularly suited to the time and milieu at which they are discovered, gTer-ma are especially applicable to daily life.

After his transmission of the doctrines arising from the Eight Heruka Sādhana and other teachings, Padmasambhava hid the texts, so that they became known as concealed treasures, or gTer-ma. As the principal gTer-ma texts were originally concealed by Padmasambhava, he may properly be called the supreme master of the gTer-ma. The principle of the gter and its method of discovery is unique to the rNying-ma-pa, as most gTer-stons, or masters of the gter, are emanations of Padmasambhava or his disciples.



Padma-gsung

Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal, Padmasambhava's consort,⁸ set into writing some of the bKa'-ma transmission and then committed these teachings to her unflinching memory. She then placed written teachings in appropriate receptacles which she later helped Padmasambhava to conceal. These concealed treasures, or continuing revelation, were uncovered by reincarnations of the major disciples of Padmasambhava, who directed them to make the discovery at a designated time and place. Upon discovery, buried or concealed texts are called gTer-ma.

Because the gTer-ston is a Bodhisattva endowed with special enlightenment qualities, he has the ability to perfectly reconstruct or deci-

8. Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, together with Mandārāvā, Śākyadevī, Kālasiddhī, and bKra-shis Khye-dren, were Padmasambhava's great female disciples.



Yang-dag-thugs

pher and explain the theory and practice described in the discovered gTer-ma texts. In Western terms, the gTer-ston may be called a 'prodigy', as he has the remarkable power of implementing the spiritual methods revealed in his particular find. From the work of the gTer-ston, in a certain sense, new forms of Dharma have been produced, for Dharma always takes on the form appropriate to our ever-changing world.

Because the human mind can interpret the Buddhadharma in a manner generally agreeable to the ego, the essence of the teachings can become confused, misinterpreted, or lose its potency. The gTer-ma masters have thus appeared at various times throughout history in order to clarify, reinterpret, or re-energize the meaning of the original teachings.

The gTer-ma master customarily serves as both the discoverer and editor or expositor of the concealed treasure, and the discovery itself is



(rDo-rje) Phur-ba-'phrin-las

announced in a prophecy. In his biography, Padmasambhava prophesied that there would emerge three 'Grand', eight 'Great', twenty-one 'Powerful', one hundred and eight 'Intermediate', and one thousand 'Subsidiary' gTer-stons. To these individuals, Padmasambhava or his disciples had given a hint or 'cipher key' (Kha-byang or lde-mig) which, when applied, gives the precise locations or place descriptions to facilitate in the discovery of these teachings.

Many of the gTerma teachings were written in a highly symbolic and codified form called 'Dākinī Language', indecipherable by those who were not specifically instructed by Padmasambhava. Often Dākinīs aid the gTer-ma masters by whispering from mouth to ear the essence of the text or artifact that has been unearthed. Very often, consorts assist the gTer-ston in his discovery, or it may be that auspicious signs appear



bDud-rtsi-yon-tan

to give guidance. Furthermore, most gTer-stons are psychically endowed with an enlightened awareness which allows them to recall the teachings which they have received from Padmasambhava.

Although many gter have already been uncovered, there are numerous other gter at various localities throughout the world that were concealed by Padmasambhava. They are fully protected from premature or spurious discovery by means of a 'time-lock' or formula for deciphering the encoded message, which can only be opened by the individual stipulated in the prophecy.

The earliest gTer-ma were the Buddha's Sūtras hidden by the Nāgas and subsequently uncovered by Nāgārjuna. However, the principle of continuing revelation was not made manifest until its widespread application in Tibet.



Ma-mo-rbod-stong

The gTer-ma texts and masters of the gTer-ma as prophesied by Padmasambhava during the early spread (snga-dar) began to appear in the eleventh century, increasing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries during the period of the later spread of the Dharma (phyi-dar).

The major gTer-stons to appear at this time were the two prominent figures, Nyang-ral Nyi-ma-'od-zer ('The Sun's Rays', 1124–1192) and Guru Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug ('Dharma Wealth', 1212–1270). These two are known as the Sun and Moon, and the results of their findings are called the Upper and Lower Treasures (gter-kha-gong-'og). These two Grand gTer-stons mark the first period of gTer-ma discoverers. Thereafter, a number of gTer-stons became known. They include Padma-gling-pa, whose collection of gTer-ma became known as the Southern Treasures (lho-gter).



Jig-rten-mchos-bstod

In the mid-fifteenth century the master Rig-'dzin-rgod-ldem-'phrul-can (1337–1408) was born with auspicious marks to a ruling family in the north. This third of the Grand gTer-stons made a number of important discoveries and later edited and compiled what are known as the Northern Treasures (byang-gter).

The three Grand gTer-ma masters, Nyi-ma-'od-zer, Guru Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug, and Rig'dzin-rgod-ldem, were Padmasambhava's mind (heart), speech, and body incarnations.

The eight 'Great' gTer-stons or Gling-pas, who emerged from the fourteenth century onwards, included Ratna-gling-pa (1403–1479), Padma-gling-pa (1450–1521), O-rgyan-gling-pa (c. 1323), Sangs-rgyas-gling-pa (1340–1396), rDo-rje-gling-pa (1346–1405), and Karma-gling-pa (14th century).



dMod-pa-drag-sngags

The period between Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa (1308–1364) and O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa ('Gyur-med-rdo-rje, 1646–1714) witnessed a great flourishing of the gTer-ma tradition; this was the time when most of the one hundred and eight Intermediate gTer-stons manifested. Other significant Gling-pas authorized by Padmasambhava's prophecy include Las-'phro-gling-pa (Ngag-dbang-chos-rgyal-dbang-po), bSam-gtan bDe-chen-gling-pa, Zhig-po-gling-pa (Nam-mkha'-tshe-dbang-rgyal-po), and bDud-'dul-gling-pa. Kun-mkhyen 'Jigs-med-gling-pa (1729–1798), who had numerous visions of Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa throughout his life, was a principal editor and compiler of the Klong-chen snying-thig cycle, as well as the sDe-dge edition of the rNying-ma'i-rgyud-'bum.

Later gTer-stons of the nineteenth century include mChog-gyur bDe-chen-zhig-po-gling-pa (1829–1870), 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-



Kah-dam-pa bDe-shegs

dbang-po (Padma-'od-gsal-mdo-sngags-gling-pa, 1820–1892), and 'Jam-gon Kong-sprul (Padma-gar-dbang Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho) Blo-gros-mtha'-yas (1813–1899), a chief compiler of gTer-ma. Late in the nineteenth century, the latter completed the sixty-two volume Rin-chen-gter-mdzod, which contains many gTer-ma works compiled in earlier centuries. However, innumerable other gTer-ma teachings exist which are not contained in this collection. In addition, further teachings are yet to be revealed by the one thousand 'Subsidiary' gTer-stons prophesied by Padmasambhava, the majority of whom have not yet appeared.

Each of the major rNying-ma monasteries maintained the teaching lineages of specific gTer-ma texts and practices, becoming famous for these distinctive lineages. dPal-yul, for example, specialized in the teachings of Ratna-gling-pa. rDo-rje-brag focused on the Northern Treasures.



Kah-thog

The gTer-ma tradition, however, is much vaster than could be encompassed either by its voluminous literature or by its monastic traditions. These time-honored treasure texts and their discoveries have provided, to those who have followed the Inner Teachings of the Vajrayāna, streamlined methods to intensify the enlightenment process.

The Eight rNying-ma Heruka Sādhanas

The origin of the eight rNying-ma Heruka Sādhanas, like the origin of the Mahāyoga, is the Ādibuddha Kun-tu-bzang-po. It is said that the Buddha's disciple Ānanda preserved the Sūtras, the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi preserved and protected the Outer Tantras, and rDo-rje-grags-



Rig-'dzin Ngag-gi-dbang-po

po-rtstal compiled and preserved the Inner Tantras, which were transmitted to him from Kun-tu-bzang-po.

rDo-rje-grags-po-rtstal then gave the Inner Tantras to the Ḍākinī Las-kyi-dbang-mo-che for safe keeping. Seeing that the Human tradition was in need of spiritual nourishment, she concealed all the Tantras of the Developing Stage (bskyed-rim) and Fulfillment Stage (rdzogs-rim), constituting the Three Inner Tantras (nang-rgyud-sde-gsum: Mahā-, Anu-, and Atiyoga) in the Stūpa bDe-byed-brtsegs-pa, located in the cremation ground bSil-ba'i-tshal (Śītavana).

The Ḍākinī concealed the sGyu-'phrul-sde-brgyud in the base of the stūpa; in the middle, the bDe-gshegs-'dus-pa; and where the stūpa located the four cardinal directions at the entrance gates, she buried the special Tantras (Bye-brag-sgos-rgyud). In the flute of the stūpa, she placed the



rDo-rje-brag

gSang-ba-yongs-rdzogs, and in the rim of the spire she placed the Rang-'byung-rang-shar Tantra. In the middle of the spire was hidden the Sangs-rgyas-mnyam-sbyor, and at the top of the spire was concealed the Yang-gsang-bla-med-yang-ti-nag-po, which originates in the primary transmission of the Atiyoga (rDzogs-chen). Prajñā Ḍākinī, Karma Ḍākinī, as well as other Dharma-protecting Ḍākinīs and Vīras (heroes) were appointed as guardians of the stūpa. This is the 'Tradition of the Concealed Texts Entrusted to the Givers of Spiritual Inspiration' (mkha'-'gro gtad-rgya'i-brgyud-pa).

During one of his journeys in India, Padmasambhava went to the Stūpa bDe-byed-btsal-pa located in the cremation ground bSil-ba'i-tshal, uncovered the bDe-gshegs-'dus-pa, and proceeded with it to Nepal. Entering the Asura Cave he vowed to all the Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, and Dharma-



Rig-'dzin Kun-bzang-sbes-rab

pālas in his presence that he would not leave the cave until he reached supreme siddhi. The Lotus-born Guru then began the Che-mchog Sādhana by symbolically opening the 'basket' of the bDe-gshegs-'dus-pa. He then vigorously practiced the Yang-dag-thugs (Che-mchog) and 'Phrin-las-phur-pa Sādhanas until he attained supreme siddhi. During his extensive practice of the bDe-gshegs-'dus-pa, he found it to contain eight sādhanas. Each of these appeared as a lotus petal arising from within the dome-shaped basket and each specialized in the propitiation of a certain Heruka.

Padmasambhava then proceeded to Tibet and brought to bSam-yas monastery these Eight Heruka Sādhanas. This precious family of esoteric sādhanas contains the source for the realization of the enlightenment experience as contained in the bDe-gshegs-'dus-pa.



dPal-yul

Each sādhana is related to a specific text, maṇḍala, mantra, Buddha-pattern, divine power (lha), in terms of visualization, color, and quality of awareness. Although Padmasambhava was the principal propitiator (Vidyādhara) of the Eight Heruka Sādhana, they were also propitiated by Khri-srong-lde-btsan (Che-mchog), Śāntigarbha (gShin-rje), Nāgārjuna (Hayagrīva), Vimalamitra (bDud-rtsi), gNyags Jñānakumāra (bDud-rtsi), and Humkāra (Yang-dag).

Eight of Padmasambhava's principal disciples were initiated by him at mChims-phu into the practice of these sādhanas, each focusing on one sādhana and becoming successful in mastering it. These eight masters became known as the Eight Great Ācāryas (Slob-dpon-chen-po-brgyad) and as The Eight Vidyādharas (Rig-'dzin Slob-dpon-brgyad).



Padma Rig-'dzin

The Eight rNying-ma Heruka Sādhana, originally propagated by Guru Padmasambhava and his disciples, were preserved by the Mahāyoga lineages of So, Zur, gNubs, gNyags, rMa, and Rong—all leading exponents in the transmission of the Cycle of the sGyu-'phrul (Māyā). These sādhana are based upon root texts and extensive commentaries which serve as practical instructions leading to meditative and spiritual development. Their accompanying texts also comprise the basis for the compilation of the sixty-two volume Rin-chen-gter-mdzod, and are a basis for sādhana practiced throughout all parts of Tibet.

The Later rNying-ma Monasteries

During the period between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, the rNying-ma-pa built innumerable retreat centers and small lay communi-



rDzogs-chen

ties where teachers and pupils could gather to teach and practice the Buddhadharma and where the more advanced practices could be revealed. These centers invariably had a temple, which was attended to by lamas, monks, nuns, and lay people.

These retreat and study centers were, in all due respects, monasteries. However, other than bSam-yas, the rNying-ma-pa did not establish major monastic institutions until very late in history.

Monasteries within the Tibetan framework were not merely religious institutions which housed celibate monks and nuns. They were major centers of culture and learning somewhat similar to the largest Western universities with their graduate schools and extensions. The major monasteries were actually cities unto themselves with complete facilities and personnel.



Zhe-chen Rab-'byams

Most of the rNying-ma monasteries were located in the central provinces of dBus and gTsang and in the eastern province of Khams, with smaller centers in the northerly province of A-mdo. During the energetic spread of rNying-ma teachings in the seventeenth century, five of the six major rNying-ma monasteries were established: Kaḥ-thog, rDo-rje-brag, dPal-yul, sMin-grol-gling, and rDzogs-chen. The sixth major center, Zhe-chen, was founded a century later.

Each of these six major monasteries served as a 'mother monastery' for numerous smaller centers in the vicinity, and each was essentially an outgrowth of early study centers which had been most favored by the Sangha. Records show that over twelve hundred rNying-ma-pa monasteries were located throughout Tibet. In themselves, these branch monasteries were whole communities and related to each one of them were numerous smaller monasteries.



Zhe-chen

Kaḥ-thog was originally founded by Kaḥ-dam-pa bDe-gshegs in 1159 in Khams, but fell into partial disrepair during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The monastery was expanded in 1656 and became well-known for its scholastic achievements relating to the sNying-thig Atiyoga transmission, especially the Khams transmission. Though only eight hundred monks and seven incarnate lamas resided there at one time, from the twelfth century onwards over one hundred thousand persons, through their practice of the Inner Tantras of the lineage of Kaḥ-dam-pa bDe-gshegs, achieved the miraculous rainbow body (*'ja'-lus*, indicating total enlightenment).

rDo-rje-brag was founded in 1610 by Rig-'dzin Ngag-gi-dbang-po in the central region of Tibet. The monastery was destroyed in 1717, along with its neighbor sMin-grol-gling, but it was rebuilt in the years that



O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa

followed. It held a monastic population of two hundred monks and had three incarnate lamas.

dPal-yul was founded by Rig-'dzin-kun-bzang-shes-rab in 1665 in Khams and was best known for its strength in sādhana, meditation practice and gTer-ma of Ratna-gling-pa. Over six hundred monks and seven incarnate lamas resided there.

Of the many branch monasteries associated with dPal-yul, Dar-thang (Tarthang) monastery was the largest. Actually, Dar-thang monastery was much larger than its mother monastery and was widely attended by the rNying-ma community around the regions of A-mdo, 'Gu-log (Golok), and rGyal-rong. Dar-thang monastery was founded around the middle of the nineteenth century by lHa-sprul Rinpoche (who was an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara), who was originally from dPal-yul. It became one



sMin-grol-gling

of the primary centers of philosophical thought throughout Tibet. A very important lama at Dar-thang monastery was Padma-mdo-sngags-bstan-'dzin, who reincarnated as Dar-thang mChog-sprul Chos-kyi-zla-ba (b. 1893), one of the seven principal teachers of Tarthang Tulku. Dar-thang monastery had over one hundred branch monasteries throughout 'Gu-log, A-mdo, rGyal-rong, and generally all over East Tibet.

rDzogs-chen, founded in 1685 by Padma-rig-'dzin, was destined to become the largest rNying-ma monastery in Tibet, holding over eight hundred and fifty monks and eleven incarnate lamas. With the patronage of the sDe-dge royal family, it was an exceptionally active center of learning, associated especially with the Atiyoga doctrine and practices. rDzogs-chen, highly respected for the vastness of its philosophical studies, was a huge city with thirteen different retreat centers. Lama Mi-pham meditated there for seven years.



Dar-thang Monastery

Zhe-chen, founded in 1735 by the Second Zhe-chen Rab-'byams, 'Gyur-med-kun-bzang-rnam-rgyal, was the last of the great monasteries to be founded. Modeled on sMin-grol-gling and rDzogs-chen, it held over two hundred monks and nine incarnate lamas. Even in the twentieth century, the Zhe-chen monastery was well-known in Tibet for its profound doctrines and its strict monastic discipline.

sMin-grol-gling was founded in 1676 by O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa and housed over four hundred monks, as well as three incarnate lamas. Its poetic and literary achievements made it one of the most esteemed centers of learning in Tibet. 'Jigs-med-gling-pa's compilation of the rNying-ma'i-rgyud-'bum came principally from the books available at sMin-grol-gling, the residence of Chos-rgyal gTer-bdag-gling-pa, its founder.



Rig-'dzin-rgod-ldem

Throughout the centuries, these monasteries and their associated branch monasteries and retreat centers have aided numerous followers of the Buddhadharmā to achieve spiritual attainment through both philosophical and meditative development.

Each monastery had its own departments of study and respective lineages of Oral transmission of Vinaya, Sūtra, Mahā-, Anu-, and Atiyoga, bKa'-ma and gTer-ma teachings. Many of these monasteries were great repositories of texts and manuscripts associated with these teachings and practices.⁹

9. See appendix for a list of rNying-ma monasteries.



Kun-mkhyen rGyal-mchog-lnga-pa

Later Lamas of the rNying-ma Lineage

O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa The great O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa (1646–1714) was one of the most essential links in the preservation of the entire rNying-ma lineage of bKa'-ma teachings of the Mahā-, Anu-, and Atiyoga. In his meditative training, he received a number of advanced empowerments and had potent visions of Padmasambhava. Both disciple and teacher to the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho, he was the holder of the entire corpus of bKa'-ma teachings and practices, as well as the Yang-dag and Phur-pa Heruka Sādhanas. Although gTer-bdag-gling-pa's accomplishments are too numerous to mention here, it can be said that he was one of the most ardent and devoted masters in the history of the rNying-ma-pa. 'Jam-dbyangs



Jigs-med-gling-pa

mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po's lineage also comes directly from this master. gTer-bdag-gling-pa's younger brother, Lo-chen Dharmaśrī, an incarnation of gYu-sgra-snying-po, was his spiritual son.

Jigs-med-gling-pa Kun-mkhyen Jigs-med-gling-pa (1729–1798) followed in the tradition of Klong-chen-pa by continuing to inspire the intellectual renaissance initiated by the omniscient Master. In carrying forth the spirit of the master, Jigs-med-gling-pa represented a further stage of the bKa'-ma tradition of the Inner rNying-ma Tantras. The compilation of the rNying-ma'i-rgyud-'bum (Hundred Thousand rNying-ma Tantras) is chiefly the result of the efforts of this outstanding scholar. Through visions of the Master on numerous occasions during his life, Jigs-med-gling-pa became a direct disciple of Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa. These visions of Klong-chen-pa inspired him to compose the Klong-



Jigs-med-rgyal-ba'i-myu-gu

chen-snying-thig cycle. In all, 'Jigs-med-gling-pa's collected works comprise nine volumes.

In response to the sectarian rivalry and persecution that became prominent during the eighteenth century among certain factions of the gSar-ma-pa, 'Jigs-med-gling-pa initiated a spirit of religious tolerance, mutual understanding, and rich synthesis of philosophical tradition, which became known as the Ris-med movement. Although this movement was formally begun by 'Jigs-med-gling-pa, it directly followed the tradition set forth by Klong-chen-pa, who studied with teachers of all the major lineages of his time. 'Jigs-med-gling-pa and his disciple rDo-ba Grub-chen became the two most outstanding teachers in sDe-dge (in Khams), the intellectual and cultural center of Eastern Tibet, which became the nucleus of the Ris-med movement. Through a fresh and revi-



rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas

talizing approach, these masters and their spiritual successors in the nineteenth century scientifically and artistically systematized many teachings of all schools of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and practice.

Jigs-med-gling-pa's root guru was Rigs-'dzin Thugs-mchog-rdo-rje, and his four major disciples were known as 'the four Jigs-med'. Of these, Jigs-med-rgyal-ba'i-myu-gu and Jigs-med-'phrin-las-'od-zer were essential to the continuation of the sNying-thig lineage after the passing of Jigs-med-gling-pa.

There are three recognized incarnations of Jigs-med-gling-pa, each one echoing a particular aspect of the Master's body, speech, and mind (heart). These three incarnations were the great nineteenth century luminary, Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, the most compassion-



dPal-sprul Rinpoche

ate dPal-sprul Rinpoche, and the accomplished siddha mDo mKhyen-brtse'i Ye-shes-rdo-rje.

rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas After the time of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa, rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas (b. 1800) revitalized the study of Vinaya, encouraged the study of the Sūtras and śāstras, and became a leading proponent in the scholastic tradition of the time. He served for a number of years as abbot at rDzogs-chen monastery, was well-versed in the Atiyoga teachings and was a holder of O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa's lineage. He was a teacher of dPal-sprul Rinpoche, and his main lineage of teachings were received by 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po.

dPal-sprul Rinpoche dPal-sprul Rinpoche (b. 1808), an incarnation of Śāntideva, was a remarkable paragon of Bodhisattva action. An erudite



'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po

scholar, he was highly respected by all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Faithfully displaying a nonsectarian approach to the Buddhadharmā, he became a leader in the nineteenth century cultural renaissance (Ris-med movement). A humble scholar, dPal-sprul Rinpoche was the disciple of 'Jigs-med-rgyal-ba'i-myu-gu, a chief disciple of 'Jigs-med-gling-pa. Of his numerous works, the Kun-bzang-bla-ma'i-zhal-lung is an important introduction to the general subject of Vajrayāna and a summary of the rDzogs-chen sNying-thig teachings.

dPal-sprul Rinpoche was the unique possessor of the Oral explanation lineage of the sNying-thig, and especially the Ye-shes-bla-ma. Written by 'Jigs-med-gling-pa, it is a summary of Klong-chen-pa's teachings, the essence of the sNying-thig. dPal-sprul Rinpoche was also the holder of the precious Oral transmission lineage of the rTsa-rlung.



Kong-sprul Rinpoche

As dPal-sprul's mother was getting old, he asked A-'dzom 'Brug-pa to attend to her in his absence. In return for this favor, dPal-sprul wished to give A-'dzom a gift, but he had no possessions. So he gave A-'dzom 'Brug-pa the most precious gift he had, the Oral explanation lineage of the Ye-shes bla-ma and rTsa-rlung.

Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po (1820–1892) was born in sDe-dge and studied at sMin-grol-gling, as well as at a number of Sa-skya monasteries. As a comprehensive scholar, he studied all the branches of science, the teachings of the Ngor-lugs (inner Sa-skya-pa teachings), the Tantric cycles, the entire bKa'-'gyur and bsTan-'gyur, and the Hundred Thousand rNying-ma Tantras. He received all the major teaching lineages that were available during this time and was blessed by visions of Padmasambhava and



Lama Mi-pham

Vimalamitra. A direct incarnation of Khri-srong-lde-btsan, he studied over seven hundred texts, while composing fifteen volumes himself.

'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, a receiver of the sNying-thig lineage, was one of the leaders in the nineteenth century Ris-med movement and had several incarnations recognized by different schools. His principal teacher was rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas.

Kong-sprul Rinpoche 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas (1811–1899) was a principal student of 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po and a prominent leader of the Ris-med movement. Author of over ninety volumes, he compiled many texts from the Sūtras, śāstras, bKa'-ma, and gTer-ma. One of his 'Five Treasures' is the sixty-two volume Rin-chen-gter-mdzod, a collection which contains the essence of the



A-'dzom 'Brug-pa

gTer-ma teachings. Because of his great knowledge he has been recognized as the direct incarnation of Vairotsana.

Lama Mi-pham Mi-pham Jam-dbyangs rNam-rgyal-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912) was a major contributor to the nineteenth century scholastic and practice-oriented renaissance of the rNying-ma. Born in Khams, he studied with many leaders of the Ris-med movement. A most versatile and comprehensive scholar, Mi-pham systematized the Sūtras and Tantras and their voluminous Tibetan commentaries and wrote over thirty-two volumes on subjects ranging from painting, poetics, and sculpture, to engineering, chemistry, alchemy, medicine, logic, philosophy, and Tantra—as well as two volumes on Kālacakra cosmology.

Lama Mi-pham compiled and practiced innumerable sādhanas, and at one time he spent seven years in meditative retreat. He was a leading



Kah-thog Siddha

disciple of 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, who considered Mi-pham as his spiritual son. Lama Mi-pham's three chief successors were Kah-thog Siddha, Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab, and Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan (Kun-dpal).

A'dzom 'Brug-pa A'dzom 'Brug-pa (Rigs-'dzin sNa-tshogs-rang-grol) was the disciple of 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po and a teacher of the Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po. Lama Mi-pham was his trusted spiritual friend, and he received visions from 'Jig-med-gling-pa when he was thirty. An essential link in the sNying-thig oral transmission, he was vastly successful in passing on his knowledge to his disciples, several of whom achieved the rainbow body. He was also one of the last great gTer-ma masters, A'dzom studied the Ye-shes-bla-ma and rTsa-rlung with dPal-sprul Rinpoche, and received teaching



Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab

transmission on thirty-seven occasions from 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, his principal guru.

Kaḥ-thog Siddha Kaḥ-thog Siddha Chos-kyi-rgya-mtsho was also a direct disciple of the first 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po and a teacher of the Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po. A great preserver of rNying-ma teachings, he was one of the spiritual successors of Lama Mi-pham. He received sMin-grol-gling's Vinaya and Bodhisattva lineages, and as a lineage holder of gTer-ma teachings, he rediscovered many essential rNying-ma Tantric texts and had them republished. At Kaḥ-thog monastery, he rebuilt 'Padmasambhava's Palace', using generous quantities of copper and gold.

Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab was a principal student of Kong-sprul. Highly learned in the teachings of Lama Mi-pham, he was



mKhan-po Ngag-dga'

the spiritual successor of the Master. He was also very proficient in the practice of the Vajrakīla Sādhana and was a poetic author, writing over thirteen volumes.

'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul imparted his lineage of the mDo-sGyu-Sems to Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab, who in turn passed it on to Zhe-chen Kong-sprul, the Second 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul.

mKhan-po Ngag-dga' mKhan-po Ngag-dga', also known as Ngag-dbang-dpal-bzang, follows the lineage of dPal-sprul Rinpoche through mKhan-po Ngag-chen, who was the disciple of dPal-sprul. He wrote a number of commentaries in the traditional style of the Indian Sūtras and śāstras, and during his time, was the principal teacher at Kaḥ-thog monastery. His major disciple was the abbot at Dar-thang monastery, mChog-sprul Chos-kyi-zla-ba, who received the sNying-thig teachings from him.



Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan

Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan, also known as Kun-dpal, was a spiritual son of Lama Mi-pham and philosophy teacher at Kaḥ-thog monastery. He received Mi-pham's oral instructions and teachings on the Bodhicaryāvatāra from dPal-sprul Rinpoche, his root guru. He was the principal teacher of sPo-ba sPrul-sku.

Seven Mūlagurus of Tarthang Tulku

In his youth, Tarthang Tulku (Dar-thang-sprul-sku, Kun-dga'-dge-legs) underwent an intense period of instruction in traditional introductory areas of study from a number of learned teachers, including his own father. His more advanced studies began when he was fourteen. During his life, Tarthang Tulku has received instructions from twenty-five teach-



Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i Chos-kyi-blo-gros

ers, seven of whom were his Root Gurus. These masters imparted to him initiations, esoteric instructions, advanced philosophical doctrines, inner Tantric explanations and practices, and a multitude of Oral transmission lineages.

The entire corpus of Buddhist teachings, as reflected throughout the pages of this short history, were held by these seven gurus. Without the continuation of the lineage by such masters, the study of Buddhism would become an academic subject bearing no ultimate meaning and having no real value. Through the efforts of these masters, the vibrancy and dynamism of Lord Buddha's realization continue to be carried on today for the benefit of those fortunate enough to study and practice within their lineage.



Zhe-chen Kong-sprul

The Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po The Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po (Chos-kyi-blo-gros, b. 1893) was born in Golok ('Gu-log). Kaḥ-thog Siddha was his first teacher. After living at Kaḥ-thog monastery, he went to rDzong-gsar monastery, which was the original monastery of the first 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po. In his travels he founded a number of retreat centers and soon became known as the 'King of Teachers'.

A comprehensive scholar and accomplished meditator, his wealth of knowledge was almost identical with that of the first 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po. Respected by followers of all schools, he extensively practiced the teachings of all of Tibet's philosophical and experiential traditions. He was the holder of all the major rNying-ma and Sa-skya lineages and was a recipient of the complete sNying-thig teach-



A-'gyur Rinpoche

ings. This outstanding master, who lived into the late 1950's, was a living example of King Khri-srong-lde-btsan, and his disciples considered him omniscient.

Tarthang Tulku extensively studied under him at rDzong-gsar monastery, receiving the teachings of the Sa-skyapa, as well as the rNyingma-pa. Imparting to him precious teachings leading to inward realization, mKhyen-brtse'i Rinpoche's oral explanations to Tarthang Tulku included a wide range of experiential and meditation lineages. His teachings included Lama Mi-pham's lineage of Oral explanation, Atiyoga instructions, gTer-ma initiations, the 'Path-and-Fruit' instructions of the Sa-skyapa, the collected writings of the first Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, 'Jigs-med-gling-pa's sNying-thig teachings, and the commentaries on the Vajrakīla Sādhana.



mChog-sprul Rinpoche

Zhe-chen Kong-sprul A direct disciple of Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab, Zhe-chen Kong-sprul (b. 1901) was known as the second 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul. Upon the death of his teacher, he became abbot of Zhe-chen monastery. Tarthang Tulku received from him the complete mDo-sGyu-Sems Inner Tantric Yoga Teachings, the lineage of the entire thirty-two volumes of Lama Mi-pham, and instructions in the thirteen volumes of Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab.

A'gyur Rinpoche 'Gyur-med-rDo-rje (A'dzom rGyal-sras 'Gyur-med rDo-rje, b. 1895), also known as A'gyur Rinpoche, was a principal carrier of the rDzogs-chen sNying-thig teachings. He was a master of both bKa'-ma and gTer-ma, and a holder of the oral transmission lineages of his father, A'dzom 'Brug-pa. He was also the unique possessor of the teachings of all the commentaries on the gSang-ba'i-snying-po,



sNang-mdzad-grub-pa'i-rdo-rje

and was a devoted follower of the three inner Tantric yoga practices (Mahā-, Anu-, Ati-yoga). A'gyur Rinpoche was the author of a large commentary to Sangs-rgyas-gsang-ba's (Buddhaguhya) commentary on the gSang-ba'i-snying-po. Recognized as the incarnation of O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa, he had innumerable students from parts of Khams and throughout Tibet.

Tarthang Tulku studied under him for two and one-half years, receiving from him the sNying-thig teachings and special Oral explanations, Klong-chen-pa's 'Seven Treasures', as well as some of his own stylistic commentaries on Mahāyoga.

mChog-sprul Rinpoche mChog-sprul Rinpoche (Dar-thang mChog-sprul Chos-kyi-zla-ba, b. 1893) was born in gZi'-gag in rGyal-rong and



sPo-ba sPrul-sku

was an essential carrier of dPal-yul's three hundred year old lineage of gTer-ma, which he received from dPal-yul Padma Nor-bu (d. 1932). This lineage of gTer-ma is based principally upon Padmasambhava's eight Heruka Sādhanas. As a monk, he received from Kaḥ-thog Siddha sMin-grol-gling's Vinaya and Bodhisattva lineages.

mChog-sprul Rinpoche imparted to Tarthang Tulku private instructions on being a lama and dPal-yul's lineage of gTer-ma and the Heruka Sādhanas of Padmasambhava, as well as Klong-chen-pa's 'Seven Treasures'. He also imparted to Tarthang Tulku most of the teachings and practices of three great gTer-ma masters: Ratna-gling-pa, gNam-chos Mi-'gyur-rdo-rje, and Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-tshon-snying-po. After bestowing on him private meditation instructions, he offered Tarthang Tulku valuable



Padma Siddhi

advice on who his next teachers should be and what subject matter he should focus on.

sNang-mdzad-grub-pa'i-rdo-rje sNang-mdzad-grub-pa'i-rdo-rje, the sixth Zhe-chen Rab-'byams (b. 1910), was an essential lineage holder of the sixty-two volume Rin-chen-gter-mdzod, which he received from Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab, who received it from the Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po. He was one of the five most distinguished masters in the province of Khams and a principal lama to the kings of sDe-dge. Tarthang Tulku received from him the corpus of gTer-ma teachings, the Rin-chen gter-mdzod lineage and thousands of initiations and practices.

sPo-ba sPrul-sku mDo-sngags-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma (1907–1959), also known as Bod-pa sPrul-sku, was an incarnation of dPal-sprul Rinpoche.

He was the disciple of Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan, with whom he studied for thirty-seven years. Spiritual successor of Lama Mi-pham's lineage, he was highly learned in all the philosophical viewpoints put forth by the Master. One of the very last scholars of the rNying-ma philosophical tradition, he was also the holder of a number of Sūtra and śāstra lineages. sPo-ba sPrul-sku was versed in the teachings of Klong-chen-pa, the gSang-ba-snying-po commentaries, and the rDzogs-chen sNying-thig. Like Mi-pham, he was a versatile scholar and wrote on a wide range of subjects, formulating insightful interpretations on the rNying-ma-pa view. sPo-ba sPrul-sku was the author of the renowned work, 'A Summary of Philosophical Viewpoints', a clarification of difficult points that are often misunderstood.

Tarthang Tulku received from him a wide variety of philosophical instruction, including Klong-chen-pa's commentary on the Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra and 'Jigs-med-gling-pa's sNying-thig teachings, as well as sPo-ba sPrul-sku's commentaries on the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra and the Abhisamayālamkāra.

Padma Siddhi Padma Siddhi's birth in 'Gu-log in 1888 had been predicted by thirteen gTer-ma masters. He was recognized as an incarnation of Srong-btsan-sgam-po, and his teachings were based to a great extent on the Maṇi Padme mantras. A most compassionate teacher, he was a living exemplar of Bodhisattva action and one of the very last holders of the Bodhisattva lineage.

Tarthang Tulku received from him numerous childhood recognitions and meditation instructions. Through his blessings, Tarthang Tulku had the opportunity to study the Buddhadharmā, and he received a number of special realizations from him. With the inspiration of Padma Siddhi, Tarthang Tulku continues to work on his behalf in service to the Dharma.

Transmission Lineages

The lines of transmission that follow name the principal holders of the lineage. There were also innumerable branches and minor lines.

★ Main line of descent

☆ Related line of descent

Vinaya Lineage, Main Line of Transmission

Śākyamuni	mChims-ston Blo-bzang-grags-pa
Śāriputra	Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan
Rāhula	Grub-pa-shes-rab
Rāhulagupta	Paṅ-chen dGe-'dun-grub
Nāgārjuna	gNas-snying Kun-dga'-dge-legs
Bhāva	dGe-'dun-rgya-mtsho
Śrīgupta	dGe-legs-dpal-bzang
Jñānagarbha	dPal-'byor-rgya-mtsho
Śāntarakṣita	'Jam-dbyangs dKon-mchog-
sBa-rigs Ratna	chos-'phel
gTsang-pa Rab-gsal	dKon-mchog-bstan-'dzin
sMar Śākyamuni	sMin-gling Lo-chen Dharmaśrī
gYor-po dGe-ba-'byung-gnas	Chos-kyi-grags-pa
Bla-chen dGongs-pa-rab-gsal	'Gyur-med-chos-ldan
Klu-mes Tshul-khrims-shes-rab	O-rgyan-bstan-'dzin
rDo-rje-rgyal-mtshan	Rig-'dzin-bzang-po
sNe-po Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan	Padma-maṅgala
'Bre-chen Shes-rab-'bar	Thub-bstan-nyin-byed
brTson-'grus-'bar	gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas
gZhon-nu-seng-ge	Thub-bstan-rgyal-mtshan
Gro-ston bDud-rtsi-grags	mTshungs-med Kun-dga'-
mChims-chen Nam-mkha'-grags	tshul-khrims
Grags-pa-shes-rab	rDo-rje'i-zhabs

Transmission Lineages

rDo-rje-'dzin-pa
Ngag-dbang-nor-bu'i-dpal

bKa'-drin-mnyam-med
Phan-bde'i-'od-zer

Bodhisattva Lineage, Main Line of Transmission

Śākyamuni
Mañjuśrī
Nāgārjuna
Candrakīrti
Vidyākoka (Rig-pa'i-khu-byug)
Kusāla-chen-po
Kusāla-chung-ba
Atīśa
Thang-pa Ja
Jigs-med-'byung-gnas
Zla-rgyal
Gro-lung-pa
Byang-chub-'od
rMa-bya Śākya-seng-ge
mChims-chen Nam-mkha'-grags
sMon-lam-tshul-khrims
Byang-chub-grub-pa
gZhon-nu-rdo-rje
Kun-mkhyen-rdo-rje

Khyab-brdal lHun-grub-grags
'Od-sangs-rgyas-dbon
Zla-ba-grags-pa
Kun-bzang rDo-rje-rgyal-mtshan
sNa-tshogs-rang-grol
bsTan-'dzin-grags-pa
mDo-sngags-bstan-'dzin
'Phrin-las-lhun-grub
O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa
Ngag-dbang-chos-dpal
Yid-bzhin-legs-grub
Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal
Auḍiyāna gSang-sngags-bstan-'dzin
Padma-dbang-rgyal
Sangs-rgyas-kun-dga'
mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po
Tshe-dbang-nor-bu
rGyal-sras O-rgyan-rnam-grol
rGya-mtsho'i-sde

Mahāyoga Lineage, Main Line of Transmission

gDod-ma'i-mgon-po
Kun-tu-bzang-po
rGyal-tshab-rigs-lnga
Rig-gsum-drwa-ma-lnga
rGyal-po rDza
Kukurāja
Indrabhūti
Siṃharāja
Uparāja
Gomadevī
Lilavajra
Buddhaguhya
Vimalamitra

rMa-lo Rin-chen-mchog
gTsug-ru Rin-chen-gzhon-nu
Gye-re mChog-skyong
Zhang-ston rGyal-ba'i-yon-tan
gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes
Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho
Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho
Nyang-chen Shes-rab-mchog
Ye-shes-'byung-gnas
Zur-chen Śākya-'byung-gnas
Zur-chung Shes-rab-grags
★ sKyo-ston Śāk-ye
★ Yang-kheng-bla-ma

★ Glan Śākya-bzang-po
 ★ mNga'ri Jo-Śāk
 sGro-sbug-pa
 Tsag-tsha Śākya-rdo-rje
 Śākya-'byung-gnas
 Glang-ston rDo-rje-'od
 bSod-nams-rnam-rgyal
 Chos-kyi-seng-ge
 Sangs-rgyas-dpal
 bSod-nams-mgon-po
 sGrol-chen-bsam-grub
 Seng-ge-dpal-bzang
 Rigs-rgyal-lhun-grub
 Sangs-rgyas-rdo-rje
 Tshe-dbang-mgon-po
 rDo-rje-tshe-dpal
 Śākya-dpal-'byor

Siddhiphala
 'Phags-pa-rin-chen
 Śākyaratna
 Zur-ston-rgyal-sras
 Padma-bdud-'dul
 Chos-rgyal-rdo-rje
 rGya-ston 'Od-gsal-rang-grol
 O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa
 Chos-dpal-rgya-mtsho
 Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal
 bsTan-'dzin-rdo-rje
 Phrin-las-rnam-rgyal
 Phrin-las-chos-sgron
 Sangs-rgyas-kun-dga'
 bsTan-'dzin-nor-bu
 Rigs-kun-khyab-bdag
 Phan-bde'i-'od-zer

Anuyoga Lineage, Main Line of Transmission

gDod-ma'i-mgon-po Kun-tu-
 bzang-po
 rGyal-tshab-rigs-lnga
 Rigs-gsum-mgon-po
 rGyal-po Dza
 ☆ Uparāja
 ★ Indrabhūti (Śākyaputra, Lwa-ba-
 pa, Guhyaputra)
 ☆ Nāgaputra
 ☆ Gayasūtra (Simhasūtra)
 Kukurāja
 Ro-langs-bde-ba (dGa'-rab-
 rdo-rje)
 Vajrahāsyā
 Prabhāhasti
 ☆ Śākyaprabha-chung-ba
 ☆ Śākyamitra
 ★ Śākyasimha
 Dhanarakṣita
 Vajrahūmkara

Sthiramati
 Sukhaprasanna
 ★ Dharmabodhi
 ★ mKhan-po Dharmarakṣita
 (Dharmarāja)
 ★ Bal-po Vasudhara
 Bru-sha Che-btsan-skyes
 ★ gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-
 ye-shes
 ☆ Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho
 Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho
 Blo-gros-byang-chub
 Tho-dkar Nam-mkha'sde
 Zur-po-che Śākya-'byung-gnas
 Zur-chung Shes-rab-grags-pa
 Yang-khyed-bla-ma
 sGro-sbug-pa
 'Gar-ston-pa
 Sregs
 Glan-ston rDo-rje-'od

brTson-'grus-seng-ge
bSod-nams-rnam-rgyal
lHa-'bum
Chos-kyi-seng-ge
Sangs-rgyas-dpal
bSod-nams-mgon-po
sGrol-chen-yab-sras
Nam-mkha'-rdo-rje
Sha-mi-la-dgu-pa
Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan
gZhan-phan-'phrin-las-lhun-grub

O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa
Ngag-dbang-chos-dpal
Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal
Padma-bstan-'dzin
Auḍiyāna
Phrin-las-rnam-rgyal
Padma-dbang-rgyal
Sangs-rgyas-kun-dga'
mDo-sngags-bstan-'dzin-
nor-bu'i-sde
'Gyur-med-phan-bde'i-'od-zer

*Atiyoga Lineage, Main line of Transmission,
Man-ngag-gi-sde*

gDod-ma'i-mgon-po
Kun-bzang-yab-yum
lHun-grub-rgyal-ba-zhi-khro-
rab-'byams
bDe-chen-rgyal-po-rdo-rje-'chang
☆ Avalokiteśvara
★ Vajrasattva
☆ Vajrapāṇi
dGa'-rab-rdo-rje
Mañjuśrimitra
Śrī Simha
☆ Jñānasūtra
★ Vimalamitra
☆ Padmasambhava
Nyang Ting-'dzin-bzang-po
lDang-ma-lhun-rgyal
rJe-btsun Seng-ge-dbang-phyug
Zhang-ston bKra-shis-rdo-rje
mKhas-pa Nyi-'bum
Gu-ru Jo-'ber
'Khrul-zhig Seng-ge-rgyal-ba

Grub-chen Me-long-rdo-rje
Rig-'dzin-chen-po Kumārāja
Klong-chen-rab-'byams
Khyab-brdal-lhun-grub
Grags-pa-'od-zer
Sangs-rgyas-dbon-po
Zla-ba-grags-pa
Kun-bzang-rdo-rje
rGyal-mtshan-dpal-bzang
sNa-tshogs-rang-grol
bsTan-'dzin-grags-pa
mDo-sngags-bstan-'dzin
'Phrin-las-lhun-grub
O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa
Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal
Mi-'gyur-dpal-sgron
Auḍiyāna
Phrin-las-rnam-rgyal
Phrin-las-chos-sgron
mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po
Blo-gros-mtha'-yas

rNying-ma Monasteries in Tibet

The following are the names of all the monasteries in Tibet that preserved the rNying-ma tradition until recent times. The figure in parentheses indicates the number of resident monks.

rNying-ma Monasteries in dBus and gTsang

bSam-yas-mi-'gyur-lhun-gyis-grub-pa'i-gtsug-lag-khang (100)	dPal-ri-theg-mchog-gling (150)
sKu'i-dben-gnas-sgrags-yang-rdzong (18)	Chos-rgyal-srong-bstan-bang-so (25)
gSung-gi-dben-gnas-mchims-phu (30)	Bying-mda'-o-dkar-brag (1)
Thugs-kyi-dben-gnas-lho-brag-mkhar-chu (80)	Kun-bzang-theg-mchog-chos-gling (8)
Yong-tan-dben-gnas-yar-klung-shel-brag (50)	Dar-rgyas-chos-gling (50)
Phrin-las-dben-gnas-mon-kha-ne-ring (8)	sNying-mdo-dgon (70)
Guru'i-sgrub-gnas-rdzong-kham-phug (10)	Kun-mkhyen-klong-chen-gzims-phug (1)
sGrags-mda'-mtsho-rgyal-bla-mtsho (8)	Yar-rje-lha-khang (5)
Brag-dmar-mgrin-bzang-dgon (6)	Sog-lha-khang-dgon (1)
sNe'u-gdong-ban-gtsang-gra-tshang (90)	Drod-sa-o-rgyan-rdzong (9)
Yum-bu-gla-sgang (5)	Byang-chub-gling (103)
'On-phu-stag-tshang (20)	gZhong-pa-lha-chu (20)
'On-lha-khang-dgon (25)	Ri-sne-dgon (30)
	Bud-rde-sgom-chen-dgon (60)
	'U-shang-rdo-yi-lha-khang (10)
	Zang-yag-brag (65)
	Gangs-ri-thod-dkar (8)

- gNubs-chen-gdan-sa (12)
lHa-lung-theg-mchog-rab-rgyas-
gling (110)
sMra-bo-lcog (60)
La-yag-guru-lha-khang (8)
lHo-brag-byang-chub-gling (23)
gNas-gzhi-dgon (60)
Tshe-lam-dpal-ri-dgon (10)
Cog-pu-ri-khrod (10)
lHa-ri-bum-thang-dgon (12)
mKho-mthing-lha-khang (15)
lHo-brag-seng-ri-dgon (17)
Ngo-mtshar-rdo-yi-mchod-rten (8)
lCags-phur-dgon (20)
bSam-yas-g.ya'-ma-lung (30)
sTag-lung-gsang-chos-dgon (90)
Chos-rdzong-theg-mchog-rab-
gling (10)
bSam-gtan-chos-gling (20)
Chos-rdzong-ri-khrod (10)
Brag-nag-ri-khrod (1)
gNas-ri-dgon (8)
lHa-lung-shar-dgon (10)
dGon-pa-byang (25)
Theg-mchog-rig-gling (22)
Chos-rdzong-tshe-bcu-lha-khang
(5)
Chos-rdzong-sge'u-dgon (1)
'Brog-brag-ra-dgon (60)
Yon-rdo-dgon (52)
Phu-ma-sa-mtsams-dgon (10)
mDo-sngags-chos-gling (30)
Yar-'brog-gling-gra-tshang (8)
Do-nang-padma-ri-khrod (10)
Do-nang-nyan-pa-ri-khrod (1)
Kha-lung-ri-khrod (15)
dBon-gzim-dgon (50)
Chos-sngon-dgon (60)
Yar-'brog-bla-brang-dgon (10)
Bla-brang-brag-dmar-dgon (1)
Do-nang-lu-gu-dgon (1)
lHo-rdzong-spang-legs-dgon (20)
rDza-yul-grub-dgon (50)
Mon-mkhar-dgon (33)
Theg-mchog-gling (53)
sMin-grol-rab-brtan-gling (60)
gTsang-dpal-ri-dgon (30)
Chos-sde-gling (45)
sGrub-gnas-mkhar-chen-brag (70)
sGe'u-lcags-phug-dgon (10)
gTsang-na-bza'-phug (8)
lCags-kha-lha-khang-tshogs-pa (1)
gTsang-gci-tsha-phug (8)
gTsang-rgyang-nam-snying-sgrub-
phug (1)
gTsang-rgyang-bla-brang-dgon
(15)
lHa-rtse-dgon-sbug (20)
gTsang-bla-gad-ser-dgon (8)
Gra-phu-dgon-phug (60)
Mus-mdog-'ug-bya-lung-pa (12)
bDe-gling-ma-ni-tshogs-pa (20)
gTsang-sgrol-lhas-dgon (15)
bsTar-brgyus-sgrub-tshogs (21)
rDzi-lung-bla-brang-dgon (33)
sMon-'gro-sgrub-sde-dgon (102)
Nyin-khang-bla-brang-dgon (50)
mKhas-sngon-dgon (30)
Khrab-sgrub-sgrub-sde (12)
Man-khang-sgrub-sde (10)
gSang-sngags-chos-gling (123)
gTsang-bya-dkar-dgon (30)
Brag-nag-bla-brang (20)
Ngam-ring-lha-bu-bla-brang (15)
bDe-phug-dgon (20)
rDzong-phu-sgrub-sde-dgon (10)
sBar-bug-rta-ze-dgon (12)
gTsang-rin-lding-sgrub-phug (1)
gCung-ri-che-dgon (30)
Ri-mo-dgon (25)
gCung-lha-lding-dgon (33)
dPal-ri-padma-chos-gling (20)

- lHa-brag-srid-gsum-dgon (52)
gCung-gi-nya-ma-phug (8)
gZhung-'od-dkar-dgon (20)
La-rgyab-mthong-gling-dgon (25)
gTsang-la-byang-dgon (10)
'Ong-mgo-lha-khang (1)
bDe-chen-steng-dgon (33)
bDe-chen-chung-dgon (1)
Rong-khams-bu-lung (8)
g.Yu-ri-gzim-phug (9)
Brag-dkar-chos-sde (20)
gTsang-gling-phu-dgon (10)
Ta-phig-bkra-shis-sgang (20)
gTsang-bsam-sgang-dgon (25)
Khyung-bde-ba-can (15)
gTsang-bde-chen-dgon (21)
Rab-brtan-nor-bu-chos-gling (30)
gTsang-rgya-mtsho-bla-brang (40)
Gram-bu-dpal-chen-ldings (45)
'Od-phug-rdza-ra-dgon (23)
gTsang-rdza-thun-dgon (30)
gTsang-g.ya'-ri-dgon (31)
Khams-mdzes-dgon (20)
'O-bran-bla-brang (25)
mKhar-ka-na-min-dgon (33)
gSang-gling-bla-tshogs (50)
Sred-padma-chos-gling (10)
sGrol-ma-ldings (10)
Sred-mkhar-chen-dgon (9)
mNgon-mnga'-chos-sde-dgon (30)
De'u-ri-khrod (31)
gTsang-sher-lung-dgon (20)
Ba-ri-lo-tsa-dgon (25)
dGon-pa-jo-khang (33)
mChod-rten-nyi-ma'i-dgon (50)
lHun-grub-chos-rdzong-dgon (10)
Ri-khrod-dpal-'byor-gling (10)
dGa'-ldan-chos-sbud-dgon (18)
gTsang-sa-'og-dgon (20)
g.Yag-sde-drag-gzhong-ma-lag-
gnyis (45)
- O-rgyan-chos-lhun-chos-bcu-lha-
khang (25)
gTsang-thar-gling-dgon (10)
Byang-lding-dgon (12)
Bu-dgon-sgrub-gra (8)
Chos-sde-rig-lding-gra-tshang (80)
Se-ra-sgrub-sde-dgon (15)
sKye-lung-ri-khrod (8)
rDza-rong-phu-dgon (25)
Phu-chung-sgrub-khang (1)
Phung-po-ri-bo-che (50)
Zang-zang-lha-brag (33)
Nyi-shar-khu-lung-sgrub-khang (1)
gTsang-lung-shar-dgon (12)
Pa-nam-chu-bzang-dgon (70)
Nya-mo-ha'o-dgon (30)
lHa-ri-gzim-phug (22)
gTsang-byung-zab-mo-dgon (40)
lHa-gdong-gsang-sngags-chos-
gling (10)
'O-yug-gos-sngon-dgon (30)
Zab-phu-lung-dgon (100)
sNye-mo-ru-dgon (50)
Rong-phu-rdza (1)
Pho-gad-rdo-mgo-dgon (20)
sGrub-sde-dgon (31)
bKha-lung-dgon (35)
Sog-rtse-dgon (30)
sKye-lung-dgon (10)
bKra-shis-mthong-smon-dgon (20)
mDo-sngags-chos-gling (60)
Pad-ma-bde-gling (50)
Kha-rag-sgrub-sde (10)
bDe-skyid-chos-gling (30)
Sri-chos-'khor-sgang (10) Yan-
ched-nub-dgon (12)
sPo-rong-padma-chos-gling (35)
Zur-mtsho-na-khra-dgon (15)
Gangs-ri-nam-mkha'-khyung-
rdzong (30)
La-stod-nub-dgon-che-ba (21)

- Nub-dgon-chung-ba (10)
mTsho-sgo-se-ra-lhun-po (8)
Sri-bya-ro-g-rdzong (4)
Byang-do-skya-dgon (150)
Drag-po-rtse-le-dgon (30)
Khra-mo-brag (30)
rGya-tsha-ze-mo-dgon (25)
gNyal-dre'u-sles (140)
rDo-mkhar-dgon (70)
Long-po-bde-chen-dgon (83)
rDo-dung-dgon (120)
dGa'-ba-lung (10)
sBa-kha-gsang-sngags-gling (120)
Yid-'ong-gsang-sngags-gling (100)
gNas-chung-rdo-rje-sgra-dbyangs-
gling (115)
Phur-cham-dgon (40)
Pre-ta-pu-ri-dgon (30)
Seng-'khor-sgrub-rgyud-dgon (30)
mDun-chung-dgon (50)
Ri-rdo-dgon (15)
sTong-rtse-ra-che-dgon (32)
mKhar-chen-dgon (40)
Phun-tshogs-chos-sde-gling (200)
Nag-tshang-bye-phug-dgon (30)
sGar-nam-mkha'-'khyung-rdzong
(35)
Bud-bde-skyid-tshal-gdon (10)
lCags-zam-dgon (40)
Nam-mkha'-lding-dgon (55)
bSam-gtan-gling (75)
Rab-gling-chos-lung-dgon (15)
bDe-chen-dgon-pa-byang (33)
Si-shing-dgon (10)
Kha-reg-chos-ldings-dgon (50)
Brag-dmar-dgon (15)
bKa'-'gyur-lha-khang-dgon (20)
sTong-ra-ra-sde-dgon (8)
Brag-'go-dgon (8)
Rlung-lung-dgon (6)
Shing-rtsa-dgon (20)
rNam-gling-sang-dgon (25)
sTag-lung-dbon-dgon (10)
Karma-lha-lding-dgon (12)
Shar-gling-dgon (70)
rGyal-ba-nub-dgon (9)
rTse'u-lha-khang (2)
Byams-pa-gling-dgon (3)
sGrub-sde-dgon (70)
Gra-ri-bo-rnam-rgyal (67)
bSam-gtan-dgon (15)
Gling-stod-dgon (17)
Nyin-mo-dgon (30)
Na-ring-dgon (35)
rTsag-sgrub-sde-dgon (9)
Cha-dkar-dga'-ldan -chos-gling
(100)
Zur-mkhar-o-rgyan-nam-mkha'-
gling (30)
mDo-sngags-gling (35)
gSang-sngags-dga'-tsal-dgon (25)
He-ru-ka'i-lha-khang (8)
Byang-'phrang-ri-khrod (6)
Brag-sne-dgon (300)
Shel-grong-gsang-sngags-gling
(50)
'Jun-chos-ldan-dgon (50)
Srin-ri-dgon (25)
Byang-chub-lding-dgon (20)
sGo-ra-chos-rdzong-dgon (30)
lHa-ru-smam-rgyal-lha-khang (35)
Pad-bkod-dgon (45)
sGrub-sde-dgon (30)
sNgags-ra-dgon (25)
Brag-dmar-steng-dgon (15)
gCung-tshang-dgon (10)
rGya'u-dgon (20)
'Byed-dgon (3)
Seng-sna-dgon (3)
Bye-ri-dgon (3)
Brag-zla-dgon (8)
Ba-sha-ri-dgon (5)

- dGon-spar-dgon (63)
Nam-steng-dgon (60)
Nyi-sde-dgon (50)
Phu-mo-dgon (8)
mKho-skyid-ri-khrod (22)
dKar-chen-dgon (8)
lCags-zhur-lha-khang (9)
dKyil-'khor-sbug-ri-khrod (8)
'Bum-sde-lha-khang (20)
Khrangs-gnyer-tshang-dgon (15)
bSe-phug-dgon (6)
Ser-mig-dgon (12)
dGon-ngar-ri-khrod-steng (8)
'Od-zer-chos-gling (20)
lHa-brag-dgon (15)
O-rgyan-bde-chen-gling (60)
Rong-ri-sna-dgon (55)
Chos-sde-gling (103)
Rong-thog-spo-dgon (5)
Chos-rdzong-dgon (30)
Chu-tshan-dgon (20)
rTa-nag-rtsi'u-dgon (75)
Bya-tsha-dgon (35)
Gung-thang-dgon (15)
bsTan-'phel-chos-gling-dgon (20)
Pa-rnam-dga'-gdong-dgon (350)
Brang-chen-dgon (30)
Tsa-ri-ri-khrod (8)
Brag-skyed-dgon (50)
Khra-mo-ri-khrod (4)
sKyid-sbug-dgon (100)
Theg-mchog-gling (205)
'Bras-sngon-dgon (20)
Brag-dmar-seng-gdong-dgon (30)
Sho-gla-dgon (31)
Tse-dpag-dgon (50)
sByang-bu-byams-dgon (8)
Thog-'brum-dgon (38)
bSangs-byon-lab-phi-dgon (60)
Dur-khrod-dgon (63)
Bu-ru-sprin-bsam-dgon (35)
dGon-pa-gra-tshang (30)
Rin-chen-chos-gling (10)
lHa-ri-gzims-phug (50)
Shod-nang-dgon (3)
Ma-sbum-ri-khrod (8)
sGrub-phu-ri-khrod (9)
Khrām-stod-thang-pu-dgon (20)
Nor-bu-dga'-ldan-dgon (22)
Ka-dgon-ri-khrod (2)
'Grel-ma-ri-khrod (6)
gYo-rngam-chos-dgon (15)
Bu-ma-chos-dgon (30)
Lung-dgon-pa (8)
gNas-babs-dgon (30)
'Jug-ri-khrod (25)
sKyil-dkar-rdzong-ri-khrod (8)
Thang-spe-ri-khrod (10)
lHa-khang-gra-tshang (28)
gYer-dbang-dgon (8)
Chos-lung-dgon (3)
sBub-chos-lung-ri-khrod (15)
Ri'u-che-ri-khrod (10)
dGu-thang-dgon (80)
Nya-pa-grub-dgon (30)
bTsan-phyug-dgon (90)
Khengs-khengs-dgon (70)
sPang-zhing-dgon (20)
gTam-bu-rin-chen-spungs (40)
bDe-chen-chos-gling (50)
Legs-spungs-dgon (30)
Ma-ha-ko-ta (55)
dGa'-ldan-chos-'phel-gling (50)
gTsang-chung-dgon (8)
Ser-kong-dgon (22)
Nyang-kha-bang-ri-bkra-shis-'od-
'bar (10)
Bu-chu-bde-chen-steng (30)
Bu-chu-bla-ma-gling (70)
Ba-phu-rig-'dzin-gling (8)
Bang-'khor-bya-khyung-dgon (9)
Shing-ki-dgon (10)

rNying-ma Monasteries in Tibet

Kar-me-ba-dgon (50)
rJe-mo-dgon (50)
Shi-ba-dgon (20)
sTag-lung-tshes-bcu-lha-khang
(10)
Mang-dkar-gnas-gsar-dgon (50)
Myu-gu-lung-thugs-chen-tshogs-
pa (20)
rGya-mkhar-bla-brang-sngags-
tshogs (25)
Chu-bzang-dgon (15)
bKra-shis-sbug-sgrub-khang (20)
Gra-phyi-o-rgyan-smin-grol-gling
(400)
Thub-bstan-rdo-rje-brag (200)
Ri-bo-dpal-'bar-dgon (50)
Dur-lha-dgon (5)
dGe-phu-mdo-bla-dgon (8)
Ko-jag-gro-mgon-bla-brang (10)
sPel-legs-bde-chen-skyid-phug
(20)
rDzong-'dun-sngags-pa-tshes-bcu
(30)
gZhis-rtse-sngags-tshogs (100)
Nyi-shar-jo-bo-dgon (20)
Rong-pu-lha-khang (10)
bSos-snga-chos-ste-dgon (20)
dGon-pa-phug (10)
Gram-mtsho-dga'-ldan-dgon (31)

Shel-dkar-ma-'dur-dgon (33)
mDo-chen-dgon (8)
Chu-'dus-spe-lags-dgon (18)
gSang-gling-dgon (35)
Shang-ha'u-dgon (20)
Ser-brag-sgrub-sde (25)
Shang-zar-bu-dgon (155)
gNya'-nang-sngo-ra-dgon (300)
'Or-sbug-dgon (80)
Be-rtse-dgon (70)
dKar-rgyan-dgon (90)
dGon-gsum-thar-pa-gling (120)
Brag-khad-ri-gong-dgon (40)
gZhung-rgyas-dgon (30)
Khram-gzigs-dgon (20)
E-'brog-dgon (30)
De-mo-rtse-le-dgon (10)
Kong-po-gong-dgon (10)
rTa-thog-yungs-dkar-dgon (20)
Drag-po-sgrub-phug (10)
lHa-brag-ldem (80)
Shel-kyi-mchod-rten (20)
Har-zhing-dgon (35)
Shel-khung-dgon (30)
dGyes-gling-dgon (2)
Ta-nag-dbyangs-chos (120)
Phu-chu-kha-rag-dgon (10)
mKhar-rgya'u-dgon (20)

rNying-ma Nunneries in dBus and gTsang

bSam-yas-g.ya'-ma-lung (10)
'On-lha-khang-dgon (20)
Tshe-ring-ljong (50)
Bai-ro'i-sgrub-gnas (20)
bSam-gtan-rtse (70)
'Od-gsal-gling (35)
bSam-gtan-gling (25)
Drag-sgrub-dgon (8)

bDe-chen-gling (5)
Chu-bzang-dgon (10)
Gra-phyi-brag-po-che (15)
Chos-rdzong-ri-khrod (30)
O-rgyan-chos-lhun (20)
Yar-'brog-shugs-gseb-dgon (10)
Gangs-phug-dgon (10)
Brag-dmar-ke'u-tshang (15)

- Sha-ri-dgon-gsar (60)
sMong-gling-dgon (30)
g.Yung-phu-rdza-lhud (20)
lHa-lung-dgon (40)
bSam-gtan-yang-rtse (31)
Sog-po-dgon (50)
Cha-lung-dgon (8)
Sle-pa-dgon (20)
lHun-rtse-dgon (25)
'Od-gsal-theg-gling (55)
Zangs-zangs-'od-gsal-gling (40)
Gangs-blon-chen-dgon (10)
Rin-chen-ldings (10)
Brag-g.yag-dgon (10)
Chos-lung-dgon (20)
bDe-ldan-chos-gling (35)
Tha-ra-dgon (35)
Zha-lu-dgon (10)
dBen-tsa-dgon (15)
sByin-mdo-dgon (21)
mChong-rab-dgon (8)
Bar-thang-dgon (10)
Tha-gru-dgon (10)
Gong-khang-dgon (20)
dBen-phug-dgon (10)
dPal-ri-dgon (10)
'Od-gsal-yang-rtse (20)
sKyid-gzhong-dgon (10)
Bra-smug-dgon (20)
Bar-thang-skyed-phug-dgon (10)
Yul-lha-brag-dkar-dgon (20)
sPang-chen-nyi-dgon (10)
sGo-rab-g.yar-sngo-dgon (25)
Chos-lung-dgon (40)
sKyog-po-mkhar-rgya-dgon (20)
dPal-chen-dgon (20)
Bye-ma-lha-khang (25)
sTag-tshang-dgon (35)
bDe-chen-ri-khrod (30)
sGrol-ma-sbug (10)
Guru-lha-khang (12)
rTa-phu-dgon (11)
Khang-stod-dgon (25)
Dung-skyong-dgon (13)
Sa-sgong-dgon (14)
sGrub-khang-dgon (35)
dByangs-mo-dgon (22)
Pad-lung-dgon (15)
bKra-shis-gdong-dgon (10)
bKra-shis-gling (12)
Chos-gling-dgon (30)
bSam-gtan-chos-gling (15)
lDab-lung-dgon-gsar (22)
Gro-lung-dgon (35)
Phu-chung-dgon (10)
dPal-sde-dgon-gsar (22)
Phung-po-ri-bo-che (20)
Phu-mar-bsam-chos-dgon (40)
Brag-lung-bkra-shis-chos-ldings
(10)
Chos-sbug-dgon (10)
bKras-'dzom-dgon (12)
sGrub-khang-dgon (15)
Phu-chung-'u-brag-dgon (18)
Bai-ro-dgon (13)
sMar-lam-dgon (35)
mDo-sngags-chos-gling (17)
Byang-chub-theg-gling (50)
Rong-chung-dgon (45)
Rong-phu-stod-dgon (38)
mTsho-sgo-dgon-'og (27)
mTsho-sgo-dgon-gsar (13)
dGon-ra-bzhi (17)
dGon-ra-dkar (20)
bDe-chen-dgon (11)
Chos-lung-dgon (4)
dGon-gsar-dgon (10)
dGon-pa-rtse (40)
Byang-gling-dgon (51)
Gram-mtsho-dgon (30)
Mu-stod-dgon (10)
Sri-khu-ba-dgon (20)

- Mang-mkhar-chos-lding (50)
Padma-gling (18)
Bum-sgrub-dgon (12)
'Brong-phu-dgon (22)
gZim-sbug-dgon (11)
Thar-rtse-dgon (11)
Shugs-gseb-dgon (410)
'Od-zer-gling (40)
rTa-ra-mdo'i-dgon (13)
rNam-rab-bsam-gtan-dgon (33)
Chu-mig-dgon (17)
'Dre-stag-dgon (20)
Gong-dkar-dgon (12)
Lo'i-mo-dgon (15)
dPal-di-dgon (15)
Chos-phu-dgon (13)
sNa-dkar-dgon (15)
Gla-klung-dgon (30)
Zangs-ri-khang-dmar (4)
Blo-dkar-dgon (20)
Brag-rtsa-dgon (15)
dKyil-chung-dgon (25)
Nye-sde-dgon (15)
dGe-bcu-bkra-shis-lding (30)
Gur-tshur-dgon (17)
bSangs-'dzin-dgon (10)
Khra-phug-dgon (15)
bKra-shis-lha-lding-dgon (22)
Zhabs-brtan-dgon (12)
dByar-smug-dgon (10)
Gong-ra-dgon (15)
bSam-gtan-gling (25)
Chos-sding-dgon (35)
sTag-tshang-rtse-shod-dgon (27)
Zab-phu-dgon (33)
Yod-dkar-dgon (25)
Mo-lung-dgon (40)
Hrad-khang-dgon (45)
sMad-chung-dgon (25)
Gad-se-dgon (20)
Gra-lung-dgon (25)
rTa-rag-brag-dgon (23)
Gangs-phu-thang-'brog-dgon (40)
Gangs-ro-gla-chu-dgon (15)
Bla-brang-dgon (20)
Srab-mo-g.ya'-lung-dgon (20)
Gad-mo-shi-chen-dgon (25)
dBye-legs-dgon (5)
Khyim-'brog-dgon (25)
Ka-dag-dgon (15)
Khra-tshang-dgon (10)
Glang-rdo-bsam-'grub-dgon (7)
lDing-chen-dgon (22)
Nyi-smad-shi-khul-dgon (11)
'O-drag-dgon (17)
dGa'-ldan-lhun-po-dgon (45)
Lung-dmar-dgon (20)
gNas-'khor-dgon (45)
Pho-lha-don-chos-dgon (5)
dGon-pa-byang (22)
bKras-shis-chos-gling (15)
Bla-brag-dgon (10)
sGang-dga'-dgon (5)
bSam-gtan-gling (17)
Chu-mig-dwangs-sang-dgon (50)
Rin-chen-sgang (70)
Brag-dkar-dgon (6)
'Dum-ra-dgon (15)
Phun-tshogs-chos-gling (37)
Gla-phyu-dgon (40)
gZhon-byang-dgon (50)
Og-chos-dgon (20)
Dzi-ma-dgon (15)
Du-ru-dgon-gsar (3)
Thus-mo-dgon-gsar (20)
Brang-ka-tog-dgon (25)
Chos-'khor-dgon (15)
Chos-rdzong-dgon (8)
lHa-lung-dgon (7)
Byams-pa-gling (40)
sPo-bo-ma-ni-dgon (30)
sMan-chung-dgon (35)

sGang-'go-dgon (90)
bDe-chen-dgon (20)
Long-po-kah-thog-dgon (30)
Len-ri-dgon (31)
'Bru-la-rin-chen-steng (25)
Be-la-ri-khrod (33)
mTsho-rdzong-dgon (27)
bSam-gtan-gling (7)
Chos-'khor-gling (60)
Rang-phu-dgon (22)
'Og-'khor-dgon (30)
gSang-ba-dga'-tshal (40)
bDe-chen-gling (25)
Guru-sgrub-phug (8)

rTa-mgrin-sgrub-phug (26)
mGo-gug-dgon (32)
dPa'-lung-dgon (8)
bDe-chen-dgon (9)
Phug-mo-che (32)
Nang-so-dgon (20)
rTa-mgrin-gnas (10)
rDo-rje-dbyings-rdzong (20)
Gangga'i-ldem (35)
gTer-phu-dgon (26)
sPa-rogs-dgon (22)
Mar-spungs-dgon (80)
Nar-gtong-dgon (31)
Mandala-ldem (27)

rNying-ma Monasteries in mDo sTod

mChod-rten-bskor-ba (100)
brGya-sbyin-dgon (150)
Mel-tshe-dgon (100)
rTogs-'phel-ri-'khrod (50)
gNas-brtan-dgon (200)
dGe-legs-dgon (40)
lJon-steng-dgon (405)
rNgas-gzhung-dgon (141)
rNes-stod-dgon (133)
Chos-rdzong-dgon (40)
sTag-tshang-dgon (100)
sNgon-yag-dgon (100)
Chen-mo-dgon (50)
sPos-ni-ri-khrod (31)
'Bar-rdo-ri-khrod (45)
Ra-kho-bde-chen-dgon (30)
Ci-byed-dgon (203)
Nor-bu-ri-khrod (105)
Kho-tsa-ri-khrod (30)
gZhal-steng-dgon (25)
Sog-chu-mdo-nyi-grags-dgon
(705)
gCung-pa-chos-'khor-dgon (303)

sBa-sha-dgon (17)
Tha-mi-dgon (18)
lJongs-ljong-dgon (55)
Ga-gra-dgon (38)
sNgo-sne-dgon (11)
rGya-chen-dgon (7)
Ri-ba-dgon-bkra-shis-chos-gling
(25)
La-ba-dgon (30)
bZo-ru-dgon (14)
sGo-chen-dgon (18)
mTsho-dkar-dgon (20)
'Brog-dgon (10)
Phag-mo-dgon (9)
Ba-reg-dgon (101)
Gu-ru-skal-ldan-dgon (30)
rNying-ma-gra-tshang (150)
Gru-ya-dgon (32)
gSang-chen-mthong-grol-dgon
(115)
Chos-'khor-gling (51)
Dal-sad-dgon (89)
Zhi-khro-ri-khrod (95)

Kis-thong-can-byang-chub-gling
(70)

dGes-la-dgon (60)

bDe-chen-gling (35)

Ra-ya-dgon (11)

Chos-gling-dgon (39)

Chos-srid-dar-rgyas-gling (50)

Su-zhug-dgon (75)

gSang-chen-dgon (125)

Ra-tsha-dgon (25)

dGe-rgyal-rdzogs-chen-dgon (137)

Ra-chen-dgon (87)

Nas-tsha-dgon (25)

rNying-ma-gra-tshang (450)

gNas-mgo-dgon (100)

rGyal-sras-dgon (350)

Siddhi-dgon (30)

Dpal-ri-dge-'dun-steng-dgon (150)

lHun-grub-steng-dgon (157)

dGon-lung-ri-khrod (20)

Go-'jo-skyid-po-dgon (150)

rTse-rong-brag-nag-dgon (55)

mKho-khyim-dgon (150)

Dur-khrod-dgon (35)

sTag-mo-dgon (25)

Wa-ti-bde-chen-dgon (70)

'On-mtso-dgon (60)

Nyag-bla-dgon (135)

Ra-mgo-dgon (140)

dNgul-ra-dgon (150)

sKya-thang-dgon (80)

Ri-mgo-dgon (35)

rGya-ra-dgon (125)

Kha-legs-dgon (70)

Chos-rgyal-dgon (50)

'Thab-ra-dgon (75)

lHu-chu-dgon (20)

bSam-'grub-dgon (42)

sBa-nag-dgon (30)

Tsha-ru-dgon (80)

Bla-ma-ri-cog-dgon (8)

Lung-phu-dgon (55)

Yang-dgon-sgrub-sde (45)

'Jo-khe-ri-khrod (30)

Bo-nongs-la-khad-dgon (55)

Bang-na-ri-khod-dgon (7)

sTag-lung-dgon (70)

rDzogs-chen-sri-siddha (55)

rDzogs-chen-sgrub-gra (60)

rDzogs-chen-ru-dam-bsam-gtan-
chos-gling (850)

Zhe-chen-bstan-gnyis-dar-rgyas-
gling (200)

Padma'i-thang (12)

Tshe-ring-ljongs (15)

gShin-rje-sgrub-phug (10)

Nag-chung-khar (10)

lCam-mo-'du-long-dgon (50)

rTse-gong-dgon (150)

Mangs-dgon-pa (70)

Nyi-lung-dgon (80)

rDza-rgyal-dgon (340)

Che-mo-dgon (105)

lCang-ma-ri-khrod (5)

Gu-lung-dgon (30)

Nor-gling-dgon (150)

Phyag-tsha-dgon (150)

Dril-dkar-dgon (80)

A-bse-dgon (30)

Ye-shes-dgon (41)

dBon-ru-stod-ma'i-dgon (135)

Bu-brgyud-dgon (127)

Nyi-zer-dgon (90)

sMan-legs-dgon (80)

sMad-stan-dgon (30)

Khro-shul-'gab-ma-dgon (105)

Ge-chag-dgon (50)

Khro-shul-gong-ma-dgon (100)

'Ju-mo-hor-dgon (225)

Phug-zhung-dgon (125)

rDzi-mgo-dgon (202)

'Ju-mong-dgon (370)

- Bar-sha-ri-khrod-nor-bu-bsam-
'phel-gling (70)
- rGyal-chen-ri-khrod-o-rgyan-rnam-
grol-gling (50)
- Phug-sngon-ri-khrod-bstan-gnyis-
dar-rgyas-gling (30)
- rGyal-chen-ri-khrod (30)
- g.Yang-khri-ri-khrod (30)
- Seng-ge-ri-khrod (30)
- Ra-ga-ri-khrod (30)
- sTag-lam-ri-khrod (30)
- Klong-rong-ri-khrod-bkra-shis-
gling (25)
- Pa-tam-dgon (100)
- Chos-'khor-gling (70)
- rNga-pad-dgon (40)
- 'Go-tsha-dgon (108)
- bDe-chen-gling (25)
- Ra-ya-dgon (37)
- Tha-ma-dgon (20)
- Su-ru-dgon (58)
- gSang-chen-dgon (25)
- Brag-gsar-dgon (40)
- Ra-tsha-dgon (85)
- dGe-rgyal-rdzogs-chen-dgon (27)
- Ra-chen-dgon (105)
- Nas-tshang-dgon (35)
- dGe-'phel-dgon (41)
- Kha-ri-bon-phrug-dgon (60)
- bDe-chen-dgon (120)
- dGe-rtse-'brug-grags-dgon (60)
- Dzong-'go-dgon (331)
- Rak-chab-sing-ri-dgon (437)
- Rak-chab-dgon (437)
- Seng-ri-rnam-brag-dgon (75)
- Khram-dge-dgon (225)
- A-'dzom-sgar (450)
- sMyo-shul-dgon (170)
- Yi-le-dgon (35)
- sTag-mo-dgon (100)
- Khang-sgar-dgon (355)
- rTse-shul-dgon (205)
- g.Yag-zi-dgon (225)
- dPe-war-e-wam-dgon (30)
- rGya-bo-ri-khrod (8)
- rNam-brag-dgon (45)
- gNas-phu-ri-khrod (7)
- dPe-war-rdo-brag-dgon (130)
- brDa'go-dgon (108)
- Bro-brdung-dgon (185)
- rMu-sang-dgon (225)
- 'Gu-re-dgon (70)
- 'Bo-ra-dgon (8)
- Chos-nyid-dgon (21)
- A-rab-dgon (8)
- Chos-rgyal-dgon (75)
- Drung-yig-dgon (55)
- dPal-chen-dgon (25)
- sGam-phug-dgon (108)
- 'Om-thang-dgon (80)
- Gra-shing-dgon (22)
- Gling-tshang-kah-tog-dgon (105)
- Legs-dgon-dgon (60)
- mGo-tsha-dgon (405)
- Khams-'ung-dgon (225)
- bDe-chen-dgon (301)
- rMog-rtsa-dgon (108)
- lCim-stod-dgon (50)
- sTag-rdzong-dgon (130)
- Brag-dmar-dgon (250)
- Dza-ka-dgon (245)
- Tshag-rag-dgon (150)
- rGyal-khri-dgon (90)
- g.Yag-rgyal-dgon (78)
- gSer-chab-dgon (55)
- Ga-ta-bsam-'grub-dgon (35)
- Le-dge-chos-gling-dgon (50)
- dPe-ri-dgon (155)
- Nyi-dgon-steng (223)
- 'A-gnas-dgon (108)
- Ko-mgo-dgon (55)
- sTag-bla-dgon (51)

- Ba-zer-dgon (47)
bKra-shis-chos-gling (500)
Guru-dgon-gsar (55)
Zur-ba-dgon (40)
Go-'jo-dgon (35)
sNyu-'ong-dgon (70)
mTsho-kha-dgon (22)
Ye-shes-dgon (60)
A-'ung-dgon (87)
rTsa-rol-dgon (35)
lHang-lhang-nor-bu-dgon (70)
Ge-sar-khyung-rdzong-dgon
(75)
Brang-dkar-rdo-rje-yang-rdzong
(110)
Guru-dgon (170)
Zhi-ba-dgon (278)
'Byung-khungs-dgon (30)
'Ur-ba-dgon (70)
lCag-mdul-dgon (75)
Mya-gzi-dgon (90)
Tsha-ru-dgon (85)
A-ni-dgon (90)
Glag-brag-rdzong-dgon (75)
sKal-bzang-dgon (255)
lHa-'bum-dgon (100)
E-wam-dgon (95)
brDa'-dge-dgon (505)
Ngar-ngar-dgon (40)
'Od-phug-dgon (305)
dPe-ru-dgon (80)
Sa-nag-dgon (75)
'Jam-'jam-dgon (250)
Bag-chags-dgon (60)
Klu-mo-ra (605)
Hor-dbyar-dgon (100)
'Dre-'tshal-dgon (260)
Gu-lus-dgon (35)
gNas-nang-dgon (321)
A-lcog-sgrub-sde-dgon (50)
'Brug-po-dgon (325)
sGo-chen-dgon (181)
Nyi-chen-dgon (60)
dGon-rnying-dgon (45)
Chos-'khor-gling (165)
lDis-lcam-dgon (60)
'Jang-sgang-dgon (83)
Cha-nag-dgon (90)
mKhar-gdong-dgon (200)
rGod-chen-dgon (250)
Shugs-khog-dgon (225)
mKar-nya-dgon (107)
mDo-mang-dgon (275)
sPyi-mkhar-dgon (1125)
Kun-gling-dgon (308)
rBa-dag-ri-khrod (71)
gTsang-mda'-dgon (550)
Seng-ri-dgon (110)
rGya-khag-dgon (60)
Ra-sher-dgon (55)
Brag-mkhar-dgon (25)
Zu-nang-dgon (35)
gSer-kha-dgon (70)
gSer-pbye-dgon (40)
dPal-ri-dgon (55)
rTa-drel-dgon (77)
sKyabs-gnang-dgon (30)
sKyer-gnang-dgon (45)
Ba-la-sgang (55)
Ba-la-sum-mdo-dgon (70)
Tse-nor-dgon (31)
Grangs-mkhar-dgon (75)
gNya'-nang-dgon (80)
mDo-sgar-gra-tshang (105)
Yig-chung-dgon (30)
sGrub-sde-dgon (28)
bKa'-babs-dgon (103)
La-khug-dgon (60)
sTag-tshang-dgon (32)
'Ba'-sgong-dgon (45)
Seng-ge-dgon (388)
rNam-kun-dgon (125)
Chos-ra-dgon (83)
bsTan-'dzin-dgon (102)

rNying-ma Nunneries in mDo sTod

Sha-chen-dgon (20)	Sa-dkar-ri-khrod (60)
Nad-chags-dgon (15)	dMar-mo-dgon (50)
sDer-mo-dgon (150)	Shugs-mgo-dgon (44)
sTeng-chen-dgon (137)	dGon-mgo-dgon (55)
lCags-mo-dgon (12)	

rNying-ma Monasteries in mDo-sMad

Khri-bcu-bsam-gtan-gling (1830)	mDo-lung-dgon (258)
Yan-rdo-dgon (165)	rGyab-dgon (40)
Pad-rdo-dgon (2580)	Brag-dkar-dgon (288)
sTag-stag-dgon (790)	Nor-lon-dgon (35)
Sa-man-ta-ka-dgon (583)	bSam-gtan-chos-gling (338)
So-nam-dgon (355)	'Bar-mkhar-dgon (470)
'Di-li-dgon (380)	dGon-gsar-dgon (75)
bDe-chen-gling (140)	Tshad-pa-dgon (40)
Khri-bcu-bde-chen-dgon (1408)	Tsha-dos-dgon (35)
Sa-stod-dgon (1800)	Tsha-khug-dgon (190)
Sa-stod-stobs-chen-dgon (1250)	lCe-dag-dgon (45)
Blo-bzang-dgon (187)	So-yog-dgon (47)
Tsa-zhes-dgon (230)	'Ja'-thugs-dgon (80)
Ku-zed-dgon (310)	Yab-'di-dgon (81)
Tsha-khang-dgon (175)	Sak-ra-dgon (40)
Ko-rog-dgon (255)	sKya-dgon-pa (60)
Dar-rgyas-dgon (158)	Shugs-pa-dgon (120)
Glo-g.yas-dgon (184)	sBas-gter-dgon (205)
Sing-so-dgon (40)	Khams-ril-dgon (115)
dKon-dbang-dgon (45)	sBa-gnyis-dgon (270)
sTag-tshang-dgon (159)	Ya-yong-dgon (60)
Mang-bskur-dgon (48)	Dza-ti-dgon (30)
mTsho-bdun-dgon (730)	Si-wi-dgon (35)
Kun-khyab-gling (46)	Nyag-tshe-dgon (60)
sTobs-ldan-dgon (93)	Pha-ri-dgon (65)
'Bo-ka-gri-dgon (350)	Ta-ro-gyang-dgon (30)
Tsha-ba-dgon (35)	Mi-ngor-dgon (35)
Pa-la-dgon (213)	rTse-ri-dgon (50)
bsTan-dar-gling (37)	Cha-mi-dgon (60)
Khang-gsar-dgon (217)	lHa-skyabs-dgon (70)
Tsha-lung-dgon (80)	bKra-shis-sgang (170)

- Tshang-song-dgon (275)
Ru-'byung-dgon (180)
lHun-grub-dgon (1291)
Mi-rgyal-dgon (10)
Te-lo-dgon (150)
gSham-lding-dgon (40)
Ba-to-dgon (350)
Tsag-dgon-pa (50)
Khang-mgu-dgon (10)
'Bo-to-stod-ma-dgon (151)
dGon-gsar-dgon (110)
A-ri-dgon (25)
Go-ri-dpal-dgon (350)
Bis-mgu-dgon (120)
sNa-'di-dgon (200)
Ze-sgro-dgon (250)
Wa-zo-dgon (156)
'Bo-to-'og-ma-dgon (130)
dPal-dgon-dgon (40)
rNam-rgyal-dgon (500)
Gu-skyil-dgon (30)
Kha-la-dgon (50)
Shon-to-dgon (80)
rDi-wi-dgon (31)
dPon-skor-chos-sgar (351)
gSang-ru-chos-sgar (205)
sTag-thog-bar-ma'i-dgon (300)
Gangs-pa'i dgon (135)
Ka-tog-dgon (135)
Tsa-mon-dgon (225)
Mo-sku-dgon (75)
Do-po-dgon (27)
Kho-pa-dgon (85)
bZhi-sde-dgon (77)
Si-ri-dgon (10)
Kyo-dag-dgon (75)
bZhag-dpal-dgon (55)
Mu-rtse-dgon (55)
rTa-thig-dgon (101)
Nyo-khi-dgon (207)
dByar-dgon (100)
Dam-chos-dgon (201)
Bram-dgon (225)
Kin-tab-dgon (35)
Tsham-nag-dgon (78)
Ri-shi-dgon (19)
Dar-gyi-snyan-ri-dgon (405)
rDo-dgon (80)
Khra-gling-dgon (55)
Drug-shog-dgon (170)
'Bol-pa'i-dgon (250)
Zla-ba-dgon (125)
Dar-thang-mdo-sngags-bshad-
sgrub-dar-rgyas-gling (1210)
Rung-dgon (150)
sGo-mang-dgon (70)
Ban-chen-dgon (90)
gDong-rdzong-dgon (50)
Khang-gsar-dgon (150)
sTa-thog-'og-ma'i-dgon (405)
'E-mda'-dgon (800)
Bon-yul-dgon (235)
mDo-thog-bkra-shis-dga'-'khyil-
dgon (200)
dPal-'byor-dgon (37)
Ci-nang-dgon (100)
gSang-lung-dgon (200)
Ber-nag-dgon (47)
'Bar-'brug-dgon (78)
rDi-la-dgon (80)
dPal-ri-dgon (300)
Sog-tsa-dgon (125)
Chu-skya-dgon (10)
rMa-chen-go-mtshon-dgon (37)
dGu-ris-dgon (300)
rDa'o-gung-mjug-dgon (308)
dGon-gung-kha (503)
Khri-skya-dgon (207)
Sri-dgon (225)
Tha-thad-dgon (280)
Tho-thugs-dgon (195)
Tsha-gsum-dgon (408)

- sMar-khams-dgon (260)
Ban-shul-dgon (300)
Rong-byi-skya-dgon (201)
dBon-bskor-dgon (205)
gTer-ston-dgon (508)
Sras-tshang-dgon (130)
g.Yu-ngog-dgon (250)
Ra-dgon-pa (170)
Ya-'gro-dgon-pa (203)
mKhar-tshe-rdo-ring-dgon (302)
mGon-shes-dgon (250)
dPe-shul-dgon (190)
Sog-gter-ston-dgon (180)
'Go-ram-'god-byang-dgon (50)
Bya-khyung-ri-khrod (30)
Guru-chos-lung-dgon (100)
rDzogs-pa-yar-long-dgon (705)
dKyil-longs-dgon (121)
Zis-dgon-pa (25)
Ra-ri-dgon-pa (60)
Kah-thog-rdo-rje-gdan (800)
dPal-yul-rnam-rgyal-byang-chub-
chos-gling (600)
Guru-dgon-pa (205)
gShin-zog-dgon (808)
Hor-shes-dgon (300)
bsTan-rgyas-dgon (550)
gTsang-mda'-dgon (790)
dKyil-sngon-dgon (302)
gSer-lha-tshe-ye-shes-seng-ge'i-
dgon (1150)
'Phya-nang-dgon (1875)
mTsho-kha-dgon (225)
gSer-stod-mgon-po-'brong-rir-
gnas-'go'-dgon (220)
Sing-sing-dung-dkar-dgon (1208)
lHa-rtse-dgon (60)
gSer-thal-sbra-dgon (50)
'Jang-sgang-dgon (185)
bKra-shis-chos-gling (550)
rMig-rjes-dgon (90)
A-'u-se-ra-dgon (250)
Be-ru-dgon (50)
rBu-zur-dgon (330)
'U-brdung-dgon (90)
Sog-steng-dgon (40)
rTags-rgyal-dgon (100)
Khri-steng-dgon (1500)
Gru-rdza-dgon (50)
Sa-mgo-dgon (30)
'Un-'ja'-dgon (50)
Ra-khe-dgon (121)
Thugs-rje-chen-po'i-dgon (330)
'Od-zer-dgon (221)
Ba-la-dgon (70)
rGya-mtsho-dgon (55)
Gar-mchod-dgon (405)
Sis-khra-dgon (52)
Mu-mtsho-dgon (75)
Li-'bag-dgon (285)
Sa-stod-dgon (230)
Nor-shul-dgon (401)
Chu-dkyil-ri-khrod (70)
rDzong-stod-dgon (81)
bSod-rgyal-chos-sgar (50)
rGya-ru-dgon (55)
Shugs-sgang-dgon (151)
gSer-brgya-phyugs-dgon (110)
A-bong-dgon (90)
Pho-gdong-dgon (350)
gZhi-chen-mkhar-dmar-gsang-
sngad-dgon (1100)
Rag-khrom-byams-pa-gling (1300)
sTag-rtse-bsam-'grub-dgon (500)
rTa-shul-gong-mi'i-dgon (508)
Bo-chung-ru-gsal-ma'i-dgon (100)
rTag-thog-gong-ma'i-dgon (160)
'Dzi-ka-smad-a-skye'i-dgon (80)
'Go-log-a-bzod-dgon (280)
'Go-log-khang-gsar-ru-mang-dgon
(300)
'Go-log-mi-ra-dgon (350)

- 'Go-log-phyag-chung-dgon (105)
Khang-gsar-ru-nyung-dgon (100)
gZis-nang-dgon-pa (300)
Pho-chen-'bum-thang-dgon (200)
sTag-lung-dgon (700)
Wa-shul-rme-ba'i-dgon-chen
(1010)
dGe-rtse-gra-lag-dgon (1360)
Wa-shul-dpon-dgon-gsum (300)
Doha'i-ri-nang-dgon (50)
mKhan-leb-dgon (50)
Phug-pa-dgon (150)
rTa-shul-bar-ma'i-dgon (80)
rTa-shul-'og-ma'i-dgon (100)
Sang-sang-gra-gra-dgon (110)
gSer-zho-rog-dgon (300)
dKyil-lung-dgon (167)
gSer-rgod-rgan-mchod-rten-dgon
(20)
gSer-gnub-zur-dgon (300)
Khang-dgongs-dgon-pa (380)
Ra-hor-dgon (1000)
Khro-skyabs-dbe-dgon (700)
Khro-smad-skyapa'i-dgon (800)
Khro-skyabs-dbang-zu-dgon (200)
Mi-nyag-dpal-ri-dgon (250)
Brag-mkhar-dgon (340)
Seng-ge-dgon (990)
gSer-lha-tshe-chu-byar-dgon (90)
gSer-kyi-reb-dgon (80)
gSer-brgya-gdong (110)
gSer-nyug-sgang-dgon (80)
rJe-dkar-lug-lha-dgon (450)
rDzong-smad-nyag-bla-dgon (87)
rDzong-stod-mtsho-dkar-dgon
(150)
Yar-stod-mtsho-nag-dgon (55)
gSer-snyag-gi-shug-'bos-dgon
(105)
rDo-smad-dgon-gong-ma (951)
sMar-mdo-dgon-bar-ma (50)
sMar-mdo-gong-ma'i-dgon-pa (70)
'Bos-stod-nag-rgar-dgon (600)
dBang-chen-'brog-dgon (100)
rTsis-mdam'-dgon-chen (110)
rTsis-mdam'-dgon-chung (150)
sDe-nang-dgon (80)
Mug-yang-dgon (100)
Rab-cha-dgon (50)
Bong-nge-dgon (50)
Gyag-'go-dgon (200)
'Go-yongs-dgon (55)
Dzi-rung-dgon (60)
A-khyung-khang-sgar-dgon (208)
Ra-los-dgon (450)
rMa-stod-ser-shes-dgon (200)
'Go-log-gad-mar-dgon (50)
Ko-chen-nyi-lung-dgon (200)
rGya-skor-dgon (200)
'Go-log-sba-sar-dgon (160)
Tsang-skor-dgon (220)
Shar-'od-dgon (2100)
Smar-yul-bar-bzhi'-dgon (400)
Sbu-tsha-dgon (100)
Ban-nag-dgon-pa (100)
Ban-nag-ri-khrod-dgon (103)
lCag-ri-'od-'bar-dgon (30)
'Brug-sgang-dgon (200)
Hor-skor-dgon (50)
Ri-zur-dgon (410)
sNyan-lung-dgon (100)
mKhar-sgang-chos-sgar (120)
Skyid-lung-dgon (200)
Sang-sang-ri-nang-dgon (105)
'Ja'-gur-ri-khrod (235)
Bya-bral-dgon (50)
mDa'-tshang-dgon (20)
Rag-chab-dgon (551)
rDo-'shugs-chung-dgon (502)
rDo-gyu-thog-dgon (500)
gYu-khog-dgon (552)
gYu-khog-bya-bral-dgon (710)

gYu-khog-bya-bral-dgon (105)
Yar-lung-dgon (141)
mKhar-nang-'gab-dgon (40)
'Dzam-thog-tsa-dkar-dgon (1005)
rDo-grub-chen-dgon (250)
sMar-dar-thang-dgon (1525)
Khri-dar-rgyas-dgon (130)
'Dzam-thang-gsang-lung-dgon
(300)
Bla-brang-bkra-shis-'khyil (710)
A-khyung-gnam-rdzong (500)
gNubs-dgon-pa (300)
Brag-dkar-sna-ba-dgon (202)
Re-kong-nyin-dgon (1240)
Re-kong-srib-dgon (1760)

Gos-sde-dgon (300)
Zhabs-dkar-dgon (30)
lJang-skya-dgon (125)
Phyogs-ra-dgon (210)
Khra-gzhung-dgon (130)
Ke-ba-dgon (40)
Hor-brgya-dgon (45)
Kha-cig-dgon (305)
Dang-'gya-dgon (700)
sPre'u-rdzong-dgon (402)
sNgags-si-dgon (410)
Gra-pa-dgon (102)
Nya-nag-dgon (208)
Satwa'i-dgon (300)
bsTan-dar-dgon (130)

*A Time Line of Western and Buddhist Civilizations**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Buddhist</i>
BCE 500		Śākyamuni Buddha
450	Peloponnesian Wars Socrates	First Council at Rājagṛha
400	Aristotle	Second Council at Vaiśālī
350	Alexander the Great	Second Council at Pāṭaliputra
300	Archimedes	
250	Punic Wars	Third Council at Pāṭaliputra Aśokan Empire
200	Timon	
150		Assembly at Puruṣapura Sāñcī Stūpa built
100	Cicero	
50	Julius Caesar	
CE 0	Jesus Christ	
50	Augustus Caesar	dGa'-rab-rdo-rje
100	Trajan	'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen
150	Marcus Aurelius	Nāgārjuna Āryadeva
200		Amarāvati Stūpa completed
250	Diocletian	
300	Constantine	Śrī Siṃha Lha-tho-tho-ri
350		Asaṅga Vasubandhu
400	Anglos conquer Briton Goths sack Rome	Gupta Dynasty consolidated Nālandā flourishing

*Tracing the development of the rNying-ma tradition in particular.

A Time Line of Western and Buddhist Civilizations

<i>Year</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Buddhist</i>
450	Attila in Gaul	
500		Dignāga
550		
600	Mohammed Pope Gregory	Srong-btsan-sgam-po Dharmakīrti
650		Guṇaprabha Candrakīrti
700		Śāntideva Khri-srong-lde-btsan
750		Śāntarakṣita in Tibet
	Charlemagne	Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra in Tibet
800		Vairotsana
850		gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes
900		
950		Zur-po-che Rin-chen-bzang-po
1000	Norsemen reach N. America Anselm	Atīśa in Tibet Zur-chung-pa
1050		Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po
1100	First Crusade	sGro-sbug-pa Mar-pa
1150		Milarepa
	Magna Carta	gTer-ston Nyi-ma-'od-zer
1200	Fourth Crusade St. Francis of Assisi	Nālandā destroyed
1250	Thomas Aquinas Marco Polo	Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug
1300	Dante	Ku-ma-rā-dza Klong-chen-pa
1350	Black Plague Chaucer	
1400	Copernicus	Tsong-kha-pa
1450	Gutenberg Columbus	
1500	Leonardo da Vinci Magellan	

A Time Line of Western and Buddhist Civilizations

<i>Year</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Buddhist</i>
1550	Martin Luther John Calvin	
1600	Shakespeare Jamestown	
1650	Galileo Descartes	Fifth Dalai Lama O-rgyan gTer-bdag-gling-pa
1700	Newton	
1750		
	American Revolution	'Jigs-med-gling-pa
1800	Louis XVI Napoleon	dPal-sprul Rinpoche
1850	Queen Victoria Darwin	First 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse
1900	Einstein World War I	Lama Mi-pham Second 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse
1950	World War II	
1969	USA lands on moon	rNying-ma in America

Now That I Come to Die

by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa

Translated by Herbert V. Guenther

Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa's parting injunctions¹ present the essentials of Buddhism in a poetic form whose special appeal lies in the use of striking similes and a beseeching refrain. The tenor of these injunctions is the realization of Being, of which it cannot be said that it is or is not, but which as dynamic wholeness makes all differentiations and assertions, positive or negative, possible. In its experience, this wholeness is cognitively meaningful from deep within itself and spreads unlimited as the open sky in its felt immediacy. It is impossible to say that this wholeness has ever come into existence as a thing, but precisely because it is not a thing, it remains infinitely fertile.

The Translation

Homage to all noble persons endowed with great compassion.

Homage to Him who is the sun,
shining in the wondrous brightness of what is good and pure,
In the primordial (sky-like) ground of Being;
Displaying various manifestations of His compassion
And looking after living beings by His charismatic actions.²

Homage to Him who, after completing
All that was to be done by him, went to Kuśinagara,³
Truly the most wondrous city,
To teach a lesson to those who believe in everlastingness.

From former time I know the nature of saṃsāra:
Therefore, from one about to leave behind
 this body which is transitory and deceptive,
Listen to this admonition which is solely for your benefit:
In worldly things there is no abiding essence.

Although you may hold, in this your life,
 to it as true, it will most likely deceive you.
Once you have fully understood that you cannot rely
On that which is impermanent and without essence,
Attend to the real meaning of Being straight away.

Friends do not last forever, but are rather like guests:
They meet occasionally and quickly go their ways.
Dismiss attachment to your companions in this magic show,
And attend to the real meaning of Being,
 which alone is beneficial.

The wealth and possessions you have amassed
 must be left behind.
They are like honey—to be enjoyed
 by those who did not gather them.
Now, while you still can, make arrangements
 for your needs on the way hereafter—
The wealth that on you will confer excellent qualities.

The house you have built is going to collapse;
 it is only a temporary abode;
You cannot stay on, but must go.
Dismiss your attachment
 and craving for places of excitement—
Resort to solitary places straight away.

Friendship and hostility are like the play of children:
Love and hatred for that which has no value
 are a blazing fire.
Avoid squabbles and resentments—
Control your mind straight away.

Deeds, having no essence, resemble a magic show:
Although you involve yourself in them for a while,
 ultimately they are fruitless.

Cease troubling about this life, dismiss worldly concerns—
Look for the road to deliverance straight away.

Your bodily existence, a unique occasion and right juncture,
Is like a precious boat:

While you still have the power to steer it
 across the ocean of frustrations,
Shun laziness, indolence, and idleness—
Activate the power of strenuous exertion straight away.

The real Guru is like an escort on a dangerous road:
With great devotion, confident of body, speech, and mind,
Depend on this guide who protects
 against the enemy of saṃsāra—
Revere and rely on him straight away.

Instruction in the profound
 is like the elixir of immortality:
Since it is the best cure for the disease of emotionality,
Depend on your inner being;
 discover precisely its quality—
Imbibe it and allow it to affect you straight away.

The three trainings,⁴ when utterly pure,
 are like the Wish-Fulfilling Gem:
They are the path itself, which here and hereafter
 offers bliss, and ultimately leads to what is good and pure.
Through them you find real peace
 in limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity⁵
 (your very Being)—
Let them develop straight away.

Learnedness is like a precious lamp:
Dispelling darkness and illuminating
 the path toward liberation,
Its beacon of prosperity and bliss
 opens the eye of pristine cognitions—
Let it shine unrestricted straight away.

Proper thoughts are like a skilled goldsmith:
They remove all impositions and doubts
 about 'this' and 'that'.

By exercising a discriminating awareness
born from thinking about what you have heard—
Absorb them within you straight away.

Cultivation (of what you have learned)
is like the taste of nectar:
Through the cultivation of what has been heard
and thought about, all emotional afflictions are remedied,
The ocean of propositions is crossed,
and the other shore of Being is reached—
In forest groves start contemplative cultivation straight away.

Vision is like the bright sky:
Free from all that is high or low, divided or partial,
Neither wide nor narrow,
it is beyond attempts to verbalize it—
Apply the tool of understanding straight away.

Contemplation is like a mountain or a sea:
Neither moving nor changing, it is lucent and unsullied:
All labeling which erupts
through the proliferation of perturbations thus ceases—
Contemplate (things) as they really are straight away.

Conduct is like the wise person:
It acts in accordance with what is appropriate and beneficial.
This realm of magic with its attachments and clingings,
acceptances and rejections, denials and affirmations—
Free it from the object-subject division straight away.

Fruition is like a guide gathering riches:
Wealthy himself, he allows others' values
spontaneously to come forth.
Without expectations and apprehensions,
the mind feels naturally blissful—
Exert yourself to win this wealth straight away.

Mind, a continual source of meanings, is like the sky:
The sky is Mind,⁶ genuine meaningfulness,
Without duality, complete and identical with itself—
Understand it thoroughly straight away.

All the variety of things and ideas
are like images in a mirror:

Void of appearances, there is yet no emptiness;
If (this paradox) is left unresolved
as to being identical or different, complacency prevails—
Know experience thoroughly for what it is straight away.

The subject dealing with its object is like a dream:
Although there is no duality (of subject and object),
ingrained tendencies cause duality to appear.
What is postulated by the intellect
is nothing self-sufficient—
Know non-duality straight away.

Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are like a magic play:
Although good and evil seem to exist (independently),
the identity (of Being with itself)
remains (unaffected by these deformations).
All that is remains unborn, like the sky—
Know this thoroughly straight away.

Mistaken identities are like a parade of happiness and misery:
Once good and evil
have individually arisen they perpetuate themselves.
In actuality they remain unborn;
in facticity they neither move nor change—
Know this thoroughly and straight away.

Intellectual postulates are like the quarrels of foolish men:
There is nothing substantial about them.
Divisive notions have introduced a split and
Philosophical axioms will take good and evil to be separate—
Know identity straight away.

The bestowing of gifts is like a precious treasure:
Inexhaustible, increasing ever more, the cause of good fortune.
To the fields of merits,⁷
whether they be inferior, mediocre, or superior—
Give what is deserving straight away.

Self-discipline is like a fine, clean carriage:
The ladder for climbing up to heaven
or to the citadel of happiness.

Restraint, adherence to what is meaningful,
and aiding all beings—
Let these qualities abide in yourself straight away.

Patience is like the unruffled ocean:
It cannot be disturbed by injury;
it is the best rigorous training.
Accepting frustrations and developing a sense of compassion—
Accustom and familiarize yourself with patience straight away.

Effort is like a blazing bonfire:
Burning away the unsuitable, it rushes toward the good.
Neither idle, unconcerned, nor lazy—
Realize this path towards deliverance straight away.

Concentration, unswerving, is like the king of mountains:
Unshaken by objectifying tendencies,
unperturbed in the presence of objects,
Wherever it is firmly settled,
it cannot be upset by anything—
Familiarize yourself with it straight away.

Appreciation is like the sun's great orb:
Dispelling the darkness of your mind's murkiness
and causing the real meaning to shine,
Raising up the sublime island of deliverance
and drying up the ocean of evil—
Intensify it straight away.

Appropriate action is like a sea captain
in charge of his precious cargo:
With it you cross the ocean of frustration,
go to the island of utter bliss, and
Realize the three sublime strata
whereby the twofold aim of life
is spontaneously fulfilled⁸—
Benefit others by appropriate action straight away.

Strength is like a hero conquering his enemies:
It overcomes the army of emotions
and proceeds toward enlightenment.

Since strength does not admit of hindrances,
and by it wholesomeness will reach its ultimate quality—
Develop it in yourself straight away.

Supplication is like the Wish-Fulfilling Gem:
All desires are granted and bliss grows naturally.
It puts the mind at rest and fulfills one's expectations—
Give supplication its great chance straight away.

Pristine awareness is like clouds gathering in the sky:
From the nourishing clouds of holistic feelings,
it lets fall the rain of prosperity and bliss,
And makes the crop of the wholesome prosper in all beings—
Make efforts to gain this awareness straight away.

Appropriate action and appreciation are like excellent steeds:
Never stumbling into worldliness or quiescence,
one's own and others' values are realized.
The five paths are traversed to their end,
and the three strata are spontaneously present—
Realize these two through your efforts straight away.

Qualities conducive to (the realization of)
limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity are like a
highway;
The road has been and will be traveled
by noble people throughout all time,
Beginning with the four inspections,
there are thirty-seven qualities in all⁹—
Make an effort to develop them straight away.

Kindness is like one's parents
Caring ceaselessly for their children, the six kinds of beings.
Their love forever aids and enables
(spiritual) success to be realized—
Familiarize yourself with kindness straight away.

Compassion is like the Bodhisattvas, the Buddha's spiritual sons:
Clothed in the armor of perseverance, they desire to free
Beings from suffering, as if it were their own—
Let compassion grow in yourself straight away.

Joy is like the considerate family elders:
Happy over the welfare of others,

They delight in providing for such welfare—
Attend intensively to joy straight away.

Equanimity is like the level earth:
Without attachment or aversion to those near or far,
and free from afflictions,
Great bliss emerges from its everlasting evenness—
Familiarize yourself with equanimity straight away.

Aspiration and perseverance, needed
for realizing limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity,
are like a true leader:
The helmsman, guiding (you) to the island of deliverance
where all wholesomeness is found,
Not deterred by worldliness,
the value in others stands out—
Over and over again bring aspiration
and perseverance to life straight away.

Devotion is like the great ocean and the high seas:
Full of what is wholesome, maintaining one flavor throughout,
Its waves of faith surge, never wavering—
Let devotion swell in your heart straight away.

Dedication is like the inexhaustible treasure of the sky:
By dedicating everything to the realm of reality,
wealth will not lessen but will grow even more.
(In) the one-flavored stratum of meaningfulness,
the other two strata are spontaneously present—
Purify the three aspects (of the situation)—
from their concretization straight away.

Rejoicing is like the vault of the sky:
Its merits are unlimited,
it is unobjectifiable and without pride,
Thoroughly transparent and unshakable—
Let rejoicing grow on and on straight away.

Furthermore, inspection is like an iron hook:
It keeps in check the untamed, drunken elephant of mind.
Turning it away from evil and tying it to what is wholesome—
Let inspection reside in you straight away.

Circumspect alertness is like an attentive sentinel:
It does not offer the thief, unwholesomeness, a chance;
It is there to guard the wealth of wholesomeness—
Have such alertness with you straight away.

Concern is like the world-encircling mountain:
It is safe from the thieving horde of emotions
And it commands the army that defeats karmic actions—
Make effort to guard the mind straight away.

Trust is like a fertile field:
It lets all desires grow into the harvest
of limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity;
The field of bliss here and hereafter,
trust always yields good fortune—
Let it increase straight away.

Generosity is like a lovely lotus pond:
What is genuine gathers there, delightful to behold.
It is true enjoyment; it is its own reward—
Let generosity bring joy to others straight away.

Pleasant speech is like the sound of thunder:
It captivates and pleases the minds of beings,
It reverberates around those to be taught
and makes them feel happy—
Gladden others by singing their praises straight away.

Calm behavior is like a true sage:
Unwholesomeness ceases, and people's trust increases.
Give up artificiality and (follow) natural discipline—
Make this your supreme conduct straight away.

Life's real meaning is like the Buddha's power:
In accord with everything, yet superior to all;
Similar to everything, yet dissimilar to all—
Let it reside in yourself straight away.

Opportunities are unstable, like autumn clouds:
Their occasion is certain to dissipate;
They have no solid core—
Thoroughly and from your heart understand this straight away.

All beings are transients, like past and future guests:
The old have gone; the young will also go.
This generation won't even last a hundred years—
Understand this thoroughly straight away.

The presence of this life is like a single day:
The presence of the intermediate state is like tonight's dream.
The presence of a future life will come as quickly as tomorrow—
Deal with life's real meaning straight away.

When all that is important has been
 illustrated by appropriate examples,
To those who have firm trust, my exhortation is:
What has come together will have to separate.
Hence I shall not tarry,
 but will proceed to the island of deliverance.
Since no reliance can be placed on the things of saṃsāra,
Let me sit down firmly on Being's unborn throne.

The appearances in this world are like a trickster,
Mendacious, a wanton whore.
Since they turn the mind from the wholesome
 and cause the crowd of emotions to increase,
Send them far away and practice what is right.

Without contentment, even 'wealth' is poverty.
The avaricious mind enjoys no satisfaction.
Contentment itself is the greatest wealth;
Even a little fills the mind with happiness.

Wine and women are the source of emotional turmoil.
Dismiss such thoughts that cause
 clinging, hankering, and craving.
Set out to emulate the sages
And contemplate in sylvan solitudes the value of inner calm.

With mind focused on the wholesome, day and night,
Renounce wrongdoing and do what is beneficial,
 as the Buddha has advised:
Unswervingly practice what is right.
Then you need not worry about death,
 for things will develop as they should.

Through actions and supplications
developed over a long period of time,
Learning and commitment naturally reside
in the disciples who must eventually go their own ways.
So also teacher and disciple must part—
Know them to be like customers in a marketplace.

These words are spoken from the heart, for (your) sole benefit:
Give up the distractions and diversions of this life
Which are provided by country, property, friends, and relatives,
And cultivate meditation in quiet places.

When nothing prevails anymore, and the time has come
to pass on,
You need (to understand the) real meaning (of life),
fearless of death.

Familiarize yourself with the quintessence
of the profoundness of the Guru's instruction.
Make effort (to comprehend it) straight away.

Strive to realize this ultimate bliss, good through and through,
The very light within,
The mystery of the within in the within,
The most supreme, the path
towards Buddhahood within a single lifetime.

Seek the meaning which worthy men transmit
By possessing the immortality-giving essence,
Being's profound value.
Experience their unique meaning
through the power of your efforts
And quickly reach the citadel of the Victorious One.

Straight away bliss supreme is realized and
Even at a later time benefits accrue.
Strive from now on for the quintessence of Being
With its vast qualities both seen and unseen.

The stars, attendants of the full moon
in a cloudless sky, have assembled.
the Lord of stars himself is about to appear.
The lotus-face of the Lord of Compassion
is made even more beautiful
by the host of Ḍākas and Ḍākinīs,

With their canopies, umbrellas, royal standards,
and courtly music.
Gently he breathes on me, intimating my acceptance.

The time has come to go; like a traveler, I must be on my way.
My joy in dying has been well earned: It is
Greater than all the wealth in the ocean
a merchant may have won, or
The godlike power of having conquered armies, or
The bliss found in meditation.
So I, Padma-las-'brel-rtsal,¹⁰ wait no longer,
But go to sit firmly on my seat
in the bliss supreme that knows no death.

This life is finished, Karma is exhausted,
what supplication could achieve has ended;
Worldliness is done with; this life's show is over.
Having realized, in one moment,
the very nature of (Being's) self-manifestation
Through the vast realms in the intermediate state,
I am close to taking up my seat
at the beginning of all and everything.

The riches found in myself have made the minds of others happy.
Through this magic existence the opulence
of the island of deliverance has been realized.
Having been with you, my excellent disciples, during this time,
I have been satiated with the joy of meaningfulness.

Now that the connection with this life has lost its karmic power,
Do not lament about this beggar
who died happily and unattached,
But constantly pray (that he be with you in spirit).

These words spoken for your benefit
Are like a multitude of lotus-flowers
gladdening the bee(-like) trusting beings.

Through the good of these words
may the beings of the three worlds
Go to the place of the origin of all and everything—nirvāṇa.

Notes

1. The year of Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa's (1308–1364) death is often given as 1363, referring to the beginning of the Tibetan lunar year, not to the end which falls into early 1364, when Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa actually died (see my *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part I, p. xv). Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa wrote three 'particular injunctions' (zhal-chems), of which this, the Zhal-chems dri-ma med-pa'i-'od, is the first. The last two, the Zhal-chems gnad-kyi me-long and the Zhal-chems mthar-thug gcig-ma, are extremely technical, requiring a lengthy commentary for every word. The positive sentiment of this 'particular injunction' calls to mind a line by the British poet Robert Browning, which therefore has been chosen as the title.

2. This verse contains an allusion to the three 'existentials' (sku) as distinct from 'categories', which deal with an ontic inquiry, not with the problems of what it means to be. Being, which is not an entity, as rDzogs-chen philosophers knew long before Martin Heidegger exploded the ontic, substantive notion of it, is likened to the open sky and is experienced as intrinsic meaningfulness (chos-sku); this meaningfulness radiates like the sun, conveying something of this intrinsic meaningfulness experienced empathically (longs-sku). And just as the sun is the source of life for the individual life forms, the charismatic activity gives meaning to each individual's life so that it is felt to have meaning (sprul-sku). For further philosophical implications of these terms, see *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part I, pp. 223 ff.

3. Kuśinagara, also spelled Kuśanagara, Kuśinagarī and, in Pāli, Kusinara, is the name of a city in ancient India. Nearby, the Buddha passed away.

4. Self-discipline, without which nothing is possible; concentration, leading to the 'feeling' of wholeness as the basis for gaining a fresh vision of reality; and discriminative appreciation, which assists in removing the fictions about reality we ordinarily perpetuate.

5. On this concept see *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part I, pp. 123 ff.

6. The capital letter attempts to indicate that we deal not with a 'thing' mind, but with the intrinsic cognitiveness of 'intelligence' of Being.

7. Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas.

8. The three sublime strata are chos-sku, longs-sku, and sprul-sku. See above, note 2. The twofold aim is the unity of the 'in-itself' and the 'for-others'.

9. For a detailed account see *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part I, pp. 241 ff.

10. One of the many names of Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa.

How Samsāra is Fabricated from the Ground of Being

by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa

Translated by Kennard Lipman

The Yid-bzhin Rin-po-che'i Mdzod¹ is an early work of Klong-chen-pa, in which he used his monastic name, Tshul-khrims blo-gros. Dr. H.V. Guenther has already translated Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho's summary of the chapter on philosophical systems (grub-mtha') from this work, in his *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice*.² Characteristic of Klong-chen-pa's genius is the way in which he has integrated what goes under the name of Buddhist cosmology into his presentation, which covers the whole range of Buddhist experience. He begins with the chapter translated here, dealing with ontology (and epistemology), and then gives a detailed presentation of cosmology, incorporating both the conception of the Hua-Yen (Phal-po-che, Avataṃsaka) Sūtra, and that of the third chapter of the Abhidharma-koṣa.

Thus the second chapter of the Yid-bzhin-mdzod deals with a vision of the Buddha-fields (zhing-khams) according to the Hua-Yen, of which our world, the Saha (mi-mjed) world-system ('jig-rten-gyi-khams), with its well-known mountains, oceans, and continents, is only an infinitesimal part. This context is entirely lacking in the cosmological presentation of the Abhidharma-koṣa, but interestingly enough we find it in the presentation of cosmology by the bKa'-brgyud-pa encyclopedist, 'Ba'-ra-ba rGyal-mtshan dPal-bzang, who was a contemporary of Klong-chen-pa.³ After detailing the evolution of the environment (gnod) and inhabitants (bcud) of our world-system (which is an 'impure' Buddha-field), including a discussion on the origin of human beings, Klong-chen-pa presents a chapter on the pleasures and frustrations of these beings and their 'worlds'. This serves as the basis for the second

major portion of his work, dealing with the Path to nirvāṇa, which begins with the reliance on a spiritual friend (dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen) who can point out to us the meaning of the situation we find ourselves in (saṃsāra). Thus, cosmology provides us with a total perspective on the situation we find ourselves in; but cosmology cannot be properly understood without clarifying the ontological (and epistemological) question of the 'nature' of the world, i.e., how has saṃsāra come about?

This is what is provided in the first chapter. Here, Klong-chen-pa presents a skillful blending of the basic ideas of the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika philosophies; that is, he combines the Yogācāra theory of the potentialities of experience (bag-chags, vāsanā), with the Mādhyamika rejection of the concept of an essence (rang-bzhin med, niḥ-svabhāva). The bag-chags are habitually developed 'schemata', 'invariants', or 'perceptual skills' built up in the course of experience by manipulating and experimenting with the environment, which begins as a potentially differentiable field in childhood and is gradually hardened into a world of stable objects (yul-gyi bag-chags), individual minds (don-gyi bag-chags), and bodies (lus-kyi bag-chags [as the focal point of experience])⁴. It is experience in terms of these bag-chags that is termed 'khrul-pa, 'going astray', 'mistakenness', 'deceptiveness'.

These bag-chags are not inert 'traces' lying around in a container mind (the unconscious), but are process-product words for the protentional-retentional character of experience, which always operates within a certain horizon of meaning and understanding. This horizon is both an indeterminate awareness of being-in-our-world (kun-gzhi rnam-shes, ālaya-vijñāna), as well as the existential horizon of the world (kun-gzhi) "as that in which the human being always already finds himself as a 'thrown project'."⁵ The kun-gzhi (rnam-shes) is not an unconscious; its development went hand in hand with the Cittamātra denial of the *belief* in an external world, a notion which is foreign to any Western psychological theory of the unconscious, to say the least. Such a denial is an attempt to bring us back from our hypotheses, our beliefs, our explanations, to the phenomena of world as horizon-of-meaning, rather than world 'out there'. Only then can we begin to untangle our involvement in our 'world-as-saṃsāra' and also begin to respond to the 'world-as-nirvāṇa', which is set forth in the second chapter of the Yid-bzhin mdzod.

The difference between the mentalistic and Mādhyamika systems is that the former locates this mistakenness in not recognizing a purely

luminous (gsal) and cognitive (rig) noetic capacity (shes-pa) which is beyond the subject-object (gzung-'dzin) dichotomy, as the source of experience; while the latter reject even this noetic capacity as as much a postulate as that of a corresponding external object. Thus, in the Mādhyamika, mistakenness is radicalized into a more general 'taking something to exist where there is nothing', for any ontological positing is seen as a limitation of the openness (stong-pa-nyid) of experience. The point is not to believe or explain, but to *know* and to *be*. There is no universal mind standing outside our experiencing, which somehow remains 'above it all', a pure witness, and yet still accounts for going astray. This is nicely brought out in the ninth chapter of Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra. The mentalist attacks the Mādhyamika presentation that *all* entities, *both* internal and external, are like an apparition. He believes there must be a pure consciousness which is not taken in by this deceptive show; without it, he says, we would be just like the magician who *must* fall hopelessly in love with the beautiful mājā-woman/man of our own conjuring. There would be no-where out of our own deceptions if everything is such an apparition. Śāntideva says no, the only reason you fall in love with this mājā-woman/man is that your experience of śūnyatā is weak. If it were stronger you would never fall for this mājā-woman/man, which you have taken to be a 'real woman/man.' In other words, *you didn't see her/him as an apparition* at all, but as some 'real', apprehendable object of your obsessed mind. Apparitionalness is not a lack, it is presence freed from the deceptiveness/obsessiveness of the bag-chags (a prominent bag-chags being the desirable body-presence of others).

The key to Klong-chen-pa's presentation is his rejection of any mentalistic conclusion to the theory of the bag-chags; i.e., that everything is one's mind. Although presencing (snang-ba), which is the presencing of the bag-chags, seeing 'this' as an object, a mind, etc., whether tacitly or explicitly, may be mental (sems), the apparent object (snang-yul) is not mental. Or to put it another way, the primary conditions for presencing may be mental, but it does not follow that the object presented is mental. Klong-chen-pa's conclusion, however, is not a reversion to some kind of realism, but rather the conclusion that such entities are "presencing although there has never been anything (to appear)" (med-bzhin snang-ba).⁶ This distinction of snang-ba and snang-yul was an attempt to clear up the sloppy thinking of mentalistic trends in Tibet. Klong-chen-pa's unification of the Yogācāra (rNal-'byor spyod-pa) and Mādhyamika (dBu-ma-pa) philosophies is also set forth

in Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho's commentary on the Dharma-dharmatāvibhaṅga (Chos dang chos-nyid rnam-'byed) of Maitreya.⁷ Mi-pham says that this text sets forth the unity (zung-'jug) of the 'two realities' (bden-pa gnyis) and equates the mentalistic system with the 'operational-conventional reality' (kun-rdzob) and the 'reflective-thematic' aspect of experiencing (chos-can), while he equates the Mādhyamika with the 'primary-absolute reality' (don-dam) and the 'prereflective-nonthematic' aspect of experiencing (chos-nyid).

What Mi-pham is saying is that the Yogācāra provides a good phenomenological description of our saṃsāric experiencing. However, the 'phenomenon of phenomenology' must also be thoroughly put into question. In questioning directly *what gives* phenomena their presence, we are led into what we can only call the Open Dimension of Being (stong-pa-nyid). The rNying-ma-pa position in regard to the Mādhyamika in Tibet is complex. Ris-med masters such as Mi-pham clearly want to preserve valid aspects of both Śāntarakṣita's Svātantrika-Yogācāra approach, which the rNying-ma-pas inherited during the earlier spread of Buddhism in Tibet, as well as Candrakīrti's Prāsaṅgika approach, which was taken up by the gSar-ma-pa schools.

It should also be noted that this 'mistaken mode of presencing', called saṃsāra, is characterized by existence in functional correlation (rten-'brel, pratītya-samutpāda). The student should consider deeply Klong-chen-pa's beautiful words about this oft-misunderstood central principle of Buddhism:

Although all these (entities) have no reality,
By the power of (duality of) the apprehendable
and the apprehending there is presencing
in functional correlation, like an apparition.
As long as the (duality of) the apprehending
and the apprehendable has not been completely exhausted,
There will miraculously appear
the cause and result of action.

Such breadth of vision and profundity of interpretation shines through in each topic Klong-chen-pa discusses. One can never be let down in trying to understand, experience, and fully realize the import of his words.

The following chapter of Klong-chen-pa's work is in the form of verses with an auto-commentary.⁸

The Translation

Now we shall explain the subject matter which makes up the body of the text: the explanation of that which is to be given up (saṃsāra) and that which is to be taken up (nirvāṇa). The presentation of these two is the important part (of the treatise). First we shall explain the ground of going astray, from which saṃsāra, characterized by mistakenness and lack of intrinsic perceptivity, (has come):

Out of the motive force for well-being
which is primordial sheer lucency,
The unconditioned, pivotal pervasive stratum
(of the world-horizon),⁹
From the very beginning pure like the sun in the sky.

When the experientially-initiated potentialities for experience (bag-chags), which come in the wake of a loss of intrinsic perceptivity, stir, sentient beings go astray (from the ground of their Being). The ground of Being, in regard to its being the foundation for the site of saṃsāra, is, like the sky, from the very beginning an open dimension without an essence. It is luminous like the sun and moon, and spontaneous (in its shining). Since beginningless time it remains what it is and does not change into something else. Since it is the reach and range which is beyond the limitations set by propositions, it is sheer lucency; and since it remains in the totality-field (dbyings) in which meaningful existence and pristine cognitiveness¹⁰ cannot be added to or subtracted from one another, it is the motive force for well-being (bde bar-gshegs-pa'i snying-po). Since it is the existential presence (gnas-lugs) of the foundation of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, it is called the pivotal pervasive stratum (of the world-horizon). Finally, it is unconditioned and has remained absolutely pure from the beginning.

Furthermore, conflicting emotions and unstable actions (that go with them) are founded (on this pervasive stratum), although they actually have no foundation, just like a mass of clouds (seems to) rest on the sun and sky. However, the ground of Being remains in its own reach and range—these (conflicting emotions and unstable actions) do not touch or join it. Since they are without any actuality, they appear as founded, although the founding and the founded cannot be established; they are mere ascriptions.¹¹ As the Uttaratantra says: “Earth-solidity rests on water-cohesion, water on wind-motility, and wind on space-spatiality. Space does not rest on any of the elementary constituents of earth, water,

or wind. In the same way, the psycho-physical constituents, the elements of our experiential make-up, and the sense-fields are founded on conflicting emotions and unstable actions; conflicting emotions and unstable actions rest on the improper use of the mind; the improper use of the mind rests on mind in its purity; and mind in its purity does not rest on anything."¹²

Nirvāṇa is also founded (on this pervasive stratum), but it is inseparable from it, like the sun and its rays, since from the very beginning it cannot be added to or subtracted from. Since we shall explain these things in detail below, we will not say any more here.

From the reach and range of this ground of Being:

The clouds of incidental obscurations,
the proliferating postulations coming
in the wake of a loss of intrinsic perceptivity,

(Become) the potentialities for
the experience of (intended) objects,
(intending) consciousness, and one's body

By the rising of the latent tendencies for going astray
into (the duality) of apprehending acts and apprehendable
projects.

Thus, the motive force of sheer lucency,
intrinsic perceptivity, has been obscured.

From the reach and range of the totality-field (dbyings) of primordial sheer lucency, which is like the sky, incidental obscurations perceptivity arises as observable qualities which are able to shine in their own light. This rising of the latent tendencies of the (split into) the apprehending and the apprehendable, which have now become a sustaining factor, is an incidental obscuration.

The three potentialities for experience which make up (the intensive structure) of mind become sedimented on the pervasive stratum. They are: objects (yul), such as color-form, etc.; consciousness (don), the perceptive functions (rnam-shes) which apprehend these objects; and one's body (lus). Since these potentialities for experience, which make themselves felt although there has never been anything (to appear) (med-bzhin snang-ba), have obscured, like dust which settles on a mirror, the motive force of sheer lucency—pristine cognitiveness informed by intrinsic perceptivity, which is the primordial ground of Being—one wanders about in samsāra. As the gSang-ba'i-snying-po¹⁴

states: “Listen! Out of the motive force for well-being, conceptual fictions and unstable actions miraculously appear.” As an analogy for obscuration:

Just as the continuum of the sky has become obscured by clouds,
Buddha capabilities are no longer manifest
and the mistaken mode of presencing,¹⁵
(consisting of) happiness and frustration, makes itself felt.

From the reach and range of the totality-field (dbyings) of primordial sheer lucency, which is like the sky, incidental obscurations (appear) like clouds, although pristine cognitiveness, which is like the sun, remains from the very beginning spontaneously co-existent with this reach and range. The limitless capabilities do not make themselves felt on account of this obscuring activity in the situation of an ordinary being, although they are manifest in meaningful existence (Rūpakāya), as well as in meaningful existence in its absoluteness (Dharmakāya)—the inseparability of pristine cognitiveness and its continuum of experience. This is due to the presence of the many clouds of potentialities for the experience of various happinesses and frustrations (that make up) the mistaken mode of presencing. The actuality of mind is sheer lucency; therefore all obscurations are incidental and can be cleared up. As the *Pramāṇa-vārttika*¹⁶ says: “The actuality of mind is sheer lucency—obscurations are incidental.” If one asks how (obscurations) are similar to clouds:

Just as the crop grows when rain falls from the clouds,
The rain of actions (leading to) happiness and frustration falls
By the stirring of the cloud of intentive mind,¹⁷
with its projects and acts of projection
characterized by a loss of intrinsic perceptivity.
The crop produced is the three realms of saṃsāra.

Just like rain-clouds trembling in the sky and falling rain are necessary for the growth of the crop, out of the reach and range of Mind-as-such, naturally pure, involvement in the proliferating fictions (*kun-tu rtog-pa*) of one’s projects and acts of projection begin to stir. By the accumulation of many actions, either positive or negative, which are the motivating force in saṃsāra, the six life-forms of the three realms appear with their corresponding modes of behavior. Since the crop of the variety of happiness and frustration multiplies, saṃsāra is just like a circle of fire (i.e., like a torch waved in a circular motion). As it says in the *Ratnamālā*:¹⁸ “The circle of saṃsāra has sustaining causes following

one after another like a circle of fire. This is asserted to be 'running around in circles'."

Now we shall explain extensively the division into three potentialities for experience in samsāra:

From among the three potentialities for experience,
which comprise the mistaken mode of presencing
The potentiality for experience of objects,
the world-as-container
Appears as the objects of the five senses, color-form, etc.

Because the beginningless potentialities for experience which have three different characteristics are implanted on the universal ground, presencing also manifests itself in three different ways. The potentiality for experience of objects, color-form, sound, odor, flavor, and tangibility, which are summed up by the external world and its inhabitants, appear as if they existed externally although there is no such thing as internal or external. When they have appeared before the mind, one becomes completely taken in by (the belief in) them as real objects; one makes them into objects of judgments, either affirming or denying (their reality). The object that one is involved with is called color-form; considered as external it is the postulate of the apprehendable. The same holds for sound and the others. As for oneself—the internal, appearance as mind:

The potentiality for experience of consciousness
appears as the eight perceptive functions
And the healthy and destructive actions based on them.

The foundational-horizonal perceptive function (kun-gzhi-rnam-shes) has founded itself on the pervasive stratum (kun-gzhi) (of the world-horizon) as the variety of potentialities for experience, and from this spread the five perceptions (seeing and the others); the conceptualizing perceptive function (yid-shes), which follows a cognition of a sense object; and the emotionally toned ego-act (nyon-yid). These eight functions are called the apprehending mind. The split into these (eight) constitutes the concept of apprehending.

If one asks why it is (called) apprehending, the answer is as follows: since, on the level of the potentialities for experience implanted on the pervasive stratum, existentially it is a loss of intrinsic perceptivity and functionally it remains without conceptualizations connected with any

apparent object, it is (called) apprehending as the potentiality for experience of the realm of formlessness (gzugs-med khams). Based on this is a cognition which is only partially clear and lucent and which is not connected with an object; this is the foundational-horizantal perceptive function, called apprehending as the potentiality for the experience of the realm of form. The five sense perceptions, which have spread from this and which are without conceptualization, are (called) apprehending as the potentiality for the experience of wholeness (ting-nge-'dzin) on the level of form. The conceptualizing perceptive function and the emotively-toned ego-act are (called) apprehending as the potentiality for the experience of the realm of sensuousness ('dod-khams). These eight perceptive functions, since they apprehend their respective objects, both with and without conceptualization, are known as the apprehending mind.

Unhealthy actions and merits accruing to healthy actions, which are founded on apprehending and which rise as a whole by virtue of it, become sedimented in the mind, since they remain like tarnish on gold. Pacification of this involvement in mind and mental events is the intent of the Middle Way. These perceptive functions are founded on (the body):

The potentiality for the experience of the body
appears as the individual forms of the six kinds of beings
And the major and minor characteristics based on them.

Because of a presencing as the various bodies of gods, men, and so forth, one becomes taken in by (the idea) 'my body'. Even in a dream when one sees water or fire or an abyss or an enemy or dogs or other things, one sees them as a danger to one's own body and runs away; thus the experience of frustration makes itself felt. Furthermore, the word 'body' is ascribed to the assemblage made up of the many major and minor divisions (of the body), and even the corpse is called a body. Even though the gods leave no corpse, that which is free from this (perishable form) is called their body.

Why is there presencing as body, consciousness, and objects? If one thinks that either everything presencing as object is a sufficient explanation, or that presencing as only body and consciousness is sufficient, this is not so. (One must) take into account each mode of appearing:

Thus the three potentialities for experience
which have been implanted on the pervasive stratum
since beginningless time,
By habituation manifest themselves
throughout one's span of life.

By the power of the three potentialities for experience that rest on the pervasive stratum, arise the three modes of presencing as presences, just as from various seeds various shoots arise. No matter where one is born, as long as the potentialities for experience are not exhausted, presencing will make itself felt like a body, mind, and objects in a dream. The variety of former potentialities, since they have existed since beginningless time, have produced former spans of life, and by continuous habituation¹⁹ this life is produced. Activity during the day forms dreams (at night), and from the continuity of the potentialities for experience in this life, arises the body, consciousness, and objects of the next (life). As the Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra²⁰ describes this process: "The three types of potentialities for experience have three different modes of presencing." And the Lord Maitreya²¹ has taught: "Since the three types of potentialities have been implanted on the pervasive stratum, appearance has three different modes of presentation."

Now²² the refutation of the errors of those proud people who have for a long time been separated from the excellent path (of the Mahāyāna) and are far from the sight of the Buddha:

Ignorant people say that everything is mental.
About the meaning of the three modes of presencing
they are very confused.
One must protect oneself and eliminate
these incorrect ways of speaking
That contain many errors and commit various contradictions,
and lead to extreme conclusions.

Those people who do not understand the Mahāyāna say that presencing and projective existence,²³ saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the inner and the outer, beings and their world—everything—is one's mind. Speaking out of evident pride, they deceive many people. They do not understand the meaning in the Mahāyāna of the three modes of presencing. Although the potentialities for experience sedimented as intensive mind may be mental, how can that which is sedimented as body and objects be mental?

Now, as to their many errors: Like the body and its appearance which exist as seen by the eye, will the mind also be established as a tangible form? Or will the body and objects which are mind-like be unable to be seen and heard? Or will the mind have color and shape, and also seeing and hearing? And if one person becomes a Buddha or goes to the lower realms, then will all become like this? And if the many presented objects become one (in mind), then will the cognitive capacities (of people) also become one? When a presence disappears, will the mind also disappear? And since the evolutive phases of earth, fire, water, and wind have mental abilities, hasn't one joined the heretical ranks of the Mīmāṃsakas?²⁴

As to their various contradictions: They are led to the conclusion that just as a cognition has its own object, (so) even an inert object has its own cognition. Then one's mind becomes something external on account of presence being external, and presenting becomes something internal because the cognitive and illuminative capacity of mind is internal. But then the presented object which exists externally and one's cognitiveness which exists internally will not be able to appear as different, because they are non-dual, both being aspects of one fact.

As to their extreme conclusions: They are led to the conclusion that at the time one is not born, one's mind exists, since there is presenting at this time. But then at the time of one's death presenting would cease to exist here. When an object that is before one goes somewhere else, they are led to the conclusion that, since presenting is one's mind, it comes and goes following one's own mind. But at the same time it goes somewhere else, they are also led to assert that one's mind is left here, in order for presenting to (continue to) be here. On account of these and many other errors, one must protect oneself and get rid of the incorrect ways of speaking of these stupid people who, like cowherds, have never heard anything (of the Mahāyāna).

One (is led to ask) whether presenting is mind or not because of such statements as, "What appears is itself presenting," "O Buddha sons, the three realms are mind only," "Because of the potentialities for experience, the mind which is stirred up gives rise to presenting as (external) objects." (But) one must understand that the statement, "Presenting is mind,"—which is made in the light of the distinction between presenting (snang-ba) and presented object (snang-yul)—is made because apprehending (something) as present or not is (the activity) of one's mind.

(Again,) although the statement, “Presenting is mind,” is intended to refute the Śrāvakas and others, who hold things to exist in truth, and to destroy the erroneous belief in an independently existing world, (still) mountains, etc., are not thereby shown to be mental. One should recognize as mental presenting (the activity) in which one becomes obsessed with the split into (a world of) objects (don), thinking, “Oh, this is a mountain,” etc.²⁵ Therefore, presented objects, such as mountains and so forth, are not mental, because one finds that their cause, effects, functioning, origin, and cessation are different from that of the mind.

If one asks, then, do they (presented objects) exist as independent objects, the answer is no. Although the realists take the macroscopic, external presences as something which is other, made up of atoms, etc., we maintain that this presenting is without a root or ground, occasioned by the intoxicant of the deceptive potentialities for experience making themselves felt before the mind. Thus, we are those who say that there is no actuality (to presented objects).

Now we shall explain the activity which produces the duality of the apprehending and the apprehendable from the three modes of presenting:

The fiction of the apprehendable arises
from the object potentiality,
And the fiction of the apprehending
from the consciousness potentiality.
The basis and peg of emotionality
comes from the body potentiality.
Because ignorant people take (these) as veridical,
they continually go round in saṃsāra.

Because one has apprehended presenting in the object mode as present, the fiction of the apprehendable arises; if the eight perceptive functions remain focused internally and then come outward (to meet their respective objects), the fiction of apprehending, called ‘mind’, arises. The body is the basis of the arising of the apprehendable and the apprehending, and provides the locus for the manifest evils due to pleasures and frustrations. By taking the three modes of appearing as veridical, one wanders continuously in projective existences, and this is frustration. As the Ārya-raṣṭrapāla-paripṛcchā-nāma-sūtra²⁶ states: “All the entities of reality have no actuality at all, like an illusion, a mirage, and the moon reflected in water. Because ignorant people take (these

entities) as veridical, they become bound; they go round continuously like a potter's wheel.”

Now, although saṃsāra has nothing to it, like a reflection, as long as the fictions of the apprehending and the apprehendable have not been completely exhausted, instruction in action and its results is very important:

Although all these (entities) have no reality,
By the power of the (duality of) the apprehendable
and the apprehending there is presencing
in functional correlation, like an apparition.
As long as the (duality of) the apprehendable
and the apprehending has not been completely exhausted,
There will miraculously appear
the cause and result of karmic action.

From the point of view of the primary reality of pre-reflective, non-thematic experience (*chos-nyid don-dam-pa'i-bden-pa*), there is neither running around in circles, nor the unstable actions produced by it. However, operationally (*kun-rdzob-tu*), saṃsāra makes itself felt like an apparition arising in functional correlation according to its corresponding causes and conditions. For this reason it is necessary to deal with saṃsāra's causes and results. If one has completely exhausted all the pervasive fictions of the apprehendable and the apprehending, there is no karmic action, since there is no loss of intrinsic perceptivity together with the potentialities for experience which make up the cause of saṃsāra. There will be karmic action as long as one has not directly experienced this.

Since loss of intrinsic perceptivity and all the conflicting emotions produced by this are not destroyed, it is important to take up (a stance of) acceptance and rejection in regard to the motivating cause of karmic action and its results. The karmic action produced by the mistaken mode of presencing which is saṃsāra is like a poisonous snake, since it always makes for frustration.

If one asks who produces and accumulates this karmic action:

The mind is all-creative of motivations and karmic actions.
Since (mistaken presences produced by these) make themselves
felt before the mind and are examined by the mind,
Exert yourself in order to discipline the errant mind.

Karmic action, the cause, is the origin (of frustration): Unstable actions and conflicting emotions, the result, can only be frustration. The root of these has been produced (as follows): on account of having come from motivations based on the (intensive structure of) mind, the mind accumulates good, bad, and neutral karmic actions. By the power of various karmic actions there appears the variety of the mistaken mode of presencing, which is present before one's mind like what is observed in a dream. Because the mind takes (this) as the apprehendable and the apprehending, error arises continually. As the Ratnakūṭa²⁷ states: "From mind arise motivations; from motivations come (further) healthy, unhealthy, and neutral motivations. From motivatedness, the happiness and frustration—and all that lies in between—of sentient beings makes itself felt." On account of this it makes sense to exert oneself in refining and disciplining one's mind.

For an analogy to the arising of the mistaken mode of presencing:

As long as one is intoxicated by datura,²⁸
Although a variety of presences come about
which seem to be like human beings,
All of them are deceptive forms;
there is not anything there.

Although those who have taken a decoction of datura see all the earth and sky full of men and women, at the time of seeing them, these presences are non-existent. Due to this substance and by the power of the mistaken mind, presences arise as the variety of the external world, but this is only the mistaken mode of presencing.

To set forth an analogy for presencing, although there has never been anything (to appear):

All the six life-forms that make up the mistaken mode
of presencing, without exception,
Have been produced by the erring mind
and its involvements—
Know that there is nothing
which is not (like) a reflection: there, yet nothing.

All the entities of reality (may be) summed up by (1) presencing and projective existence, beings and their world (i.e., objects, which appear externally as other, which may even be broken up into a hundred fine particles); and (2) the apprehending mind, which is internal—the

self. Apart from this there is no other entity whatsoever to be found. (All such entities) are incidental (contingent), since they are presencing although there has never been anything (to appear).

For example, when a person is drunk on beer, although the world appears to turn round and round, there really is no turning. From the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*:²⁹ “When people are drunk on beer, although the earth seems to move, there is actually no moving or shaking. Know that all the entities of reality (are present) in this way.”

Now, in summary: the exhortation to know what is the primordial ground for going astray into presencing although there has never been anything (to appear):

Actually, saṃsāra is like a reflection;
Investigate from what it arises originally.
By this one knows nirvāṇa.
Thus one will become a Buddha,
free from projective existence.

One knows what saṃsāra is by properly investigating the motive force of primordial sheer lucency, the totality-field from which saṃsāra, which is without actuality like a reflection in a mirror, arises. (And when one knows this,) by entering into a non-dual pristine cognitiveness, one is free from the partiality of the mistaken mode of presencing which makes up projective existence. In order to manifest complete clarity (*mngon-par byang-chub*), investigate the primordial actuality (from which saṃsāra arises). From the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*: “Once the world arises, it is destroyed; it has no abiding essence. What is before and after it remains the same. Investigate that from which the world originally arose.”

Notes

1. The full title of the auto-commentary is *Theg-pa chen-po man-ngag-gi bstan-bcos Yid-bzhin rin-po-che'i mdzod-kyi 'grel-pa padma-dkar-po*. The edition used was published by Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, Gangtok, Sikkim. Chapter One is found on pp. 8–23.

2. The twelfth chapter of the *Yid-bzhin mdzod* is on the philosophical systems.

3. See *A Tibetan Encyclopedia of Buddhist Scholasticism*, vol. 7: “*Byang-chub sems-dpa'i bslab-pa rin-po-che'i gter-mdzod-las nges-'byung-gi dad-pa'jig-rten-gyi khams bstan-pa'i bskor*,” published by Ngawang Gyalsten and Ngawang

Lungtok, Dehradun 1970, esp. pp. 247–270. Note that the title indicates that the study of cosmology produces a confident determination to “get out” of samsāra (nges-'byung-gi dad-pa skyed-pa).

4. Indian texts speak of grāhaka-, grāhya-, and karma-vāsanā. Grāhaka ('dzin-pa) corresponds to don, the apprehending mind, and grāhya (gzung-pa) to yul, the apprehendable object. Karma (las) corresponds to lus, bodily subjectivity, because, as Klong-chen-pa states, karma-vāsanā indicates the gathering of one's karma 'in' the body as the focal point of experience. See *Vijñapti-matratāsiddhi*, translated by L. Poussin (Paris, Paul Guethner, 1929), pp. 473 ff.

5. Heidegger, M., *The Piety of Thinking*, Indiana Univ. Press, 1976, p. 84.

6. See the final pages of this translation for a presentation of these ideas.

7. The title of Mi-pham's commentary is Chos-dang-chos-nyid-rnam-par byed-pa'i tshig-le'ur byas-pa'i 'grel-pa ye-shes snang-ba rnam-'byed, published by Tarthang Tulku, Vārāṇasī, India, 1967. The statements made above are to be found on pp. 4–5 of this text.

8. Indian philosophic-religious treatises were often written in this way. The verses are extremely terse mnemonic devices memorized by the student and are most often largely unintelligible without the commentary, usually written by the teacher himself or by a disciple. After the student had mastered the text, the whole teaching was 'at his fingertips', for the meaning of the memorized verses was now integral to his being.

9. don-gyi kun-gzhi. “Don is the value of Being residing in the experiencer as the pivot (don) of experiences which he tends to externalize and project into a fictitious realm.” (H. V. Guenther, tr., *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, Part One: Mind. Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1975, p. 291). We must distinguish between the ground (gzhi) and the pervasive stratum (kun-gzhi). Going astray ('khrul-pa) into the subject-object dichotomy (gzung-'dzin), which we call mind, is the result of not understanding that everything proceeds from the ground, not as an emanation of some sort, but as its active presentifying or functioning (gzhi-snang). As an ongoing act or possibility, this understanding (nirvāṇa) or lack of understanding (samsāra) is referred to as kun-gzhi. In other words, we are already on our way whenever we make a start (gzhi)—there are always latent tendencies, and there is no pure beginning within the mistaken mode of presencing that we call mind. Not to succumb to these tendencies is to move on the path to nirvāṇa. The Ground of Being, however, is rang-byung-gi rig-pa, the cognitive intrinsicity of Being, which is not mixed up with these habitual potentialities for experiencing. When it is mixed up with these then we can speak of the kun-gzhi as potential for samsāra and nirvāṇa. Klong-chen-pa states, in elucidating the first three members of the principle of functional correlation (rten-'brel):

Because one does not understand self-presentational immediacy, when facticity (ngo-bo), actuality (rang-bzhin), and cognitive responsiveness (thugs-rje), which (come) out of the primordial Ground of Being, a presence tending in the direction of objectness, (there is) loss of intrinsic perceptivity (ma-rig-pa). From this, since

one makes an object-like apprehension by virtue of the proliferating postulations which come in the wake of a loss of intrinsic perceptivity, (there is) motivatedness ('du-byed) in samsāra. From this, because intrinsic perceptivity has been contaminated by the potentialities for experiencing, it is transformed into the pervasive stratum (of the world-horizon) (kun-gzhi). (mKha-'gro yang-tig, Part Two, Tulku Tsewang, Jamyang and L. Tashi, Publishers, New Delhi, 1971. f. 88a)

Ground is thus a short-hand term for the unitary functioning (ngo-bo, rang-bzhin, thugs-rje) that is Being.

10. sku dang ye-shes. Being, as founding, and Knowing, as founded, are inseparable. The subordination of Knowing to Being leads to the limitations of Realism; the subordination of Being to Knowing leads to the limitations of Idealism. sKu has many affinities with the existential-phenomenological concept of Existenz, which should be distinguished from the traditional concept of existence. It "is neither a simple designation of a *quid est* nor a designation of finite existents in general. It has to do with the emerging of experience in the contextualism of its embodiment, speech, and sociality, whence organizing and interpretive notions arise and whither they return for their justification." Furthermore, it involves "the world-fact of the emerging of experience in its varied intentionalities." (C. O. Schrag, *Experience and Being*, Northwestern Univ. Press, Evanston, Ill., 1969, pp. 268–269.)

11. We have translated gzhi as Ground of Being (literally, it means ground). However, this should not be taken as the metaphysical 'Ground' of Western philosophy, the logos, the reason which grounds the existence of particular beings, in accord with the principle, "Nothing exists without a ground." Heidegger calls Western metaphysics 'Onto-theo-logical' because such a Ground, in the course of Western thinking, comes to be taken as the highest or most perfect Being. Our text states that the mistaken presencing ('khrul-snang) that makes up samsāra is groundless and exhorts us, at the end of the chapter, to investigate the 'primordial actuality' from which the whole relation of founded and founding, which we call 'the world', arises. Heidegger states: "All founding and every appearance of something being able to be grounded would degrade Being to a being" (Heidegger, M., *The Piety of Thinking*, p. 100). gzhi is not a being. The admonition of our text is also stated by a translator of Heidegger:

The task is to presence that which is nearer than all that is present and which is prior to all measures, reasons, and grounds. . . . In the Why of metaphysical inquiry, and thereby in the Why of all other inquiries, there is concealed an original determination which always thinks of Being as foundation or ground. "Why?" never ceases to mean For what reason? On what basis? Thinking which attempts to undo itself from this initial presupposition will then think without the Why. In searching for the measure with which one thinks without the Why, one comes upon a groundlessness wherein the human being is not at all at home (*Ibid.*, p. 101).

Thus, in the Buddhist context, the question "Why is there this loss of intrinsic awareness (ma-rig-pa)?" or "Why is there samsāra?" must be "undone"

for it is part of ma-rig-pa itself. That is, one's whole questioning always begins in a *finding-oneself in an already on-going* situation. We tend to forget this in searching for *reasons* within this now-discovered state of affairs, whether we locate these reasons in the present or the past. What really calls for our thinking, according to Heidegger as well as Klong-chen-pa, is this phenomenon of 'always already finding ourselves,' which first 'gives' us reflective, thematizing experience. The basic point is that, in the Mahāyāna, 'going astray' is a process of self-deception intrinsic to experiencing; one cannot appeal to any causal principles operating on the process from without.

12. That is, the analogy is made between earth and the psycho-physical constituents (phung-po), sense-fields (skye-mched), and elements of our experiential make-up (khams), which constitute our 'world' of frustration; between water and conflicting emotions (nyon-mongs) and unstable actions (las); between wind and the improper use of the mind (tshul-min yid-la byed-pa); and between space and mind in its purity (dag-pa'i sems). The Uttaratantra (rGyud bla-ma) is one of the Five Treatises of Maitreya, written down by Asaṅga. Its subject matter is the Tathāgatagarbha.

Two things should be noted in regard to the practice of quoting 'scripture' in Buddhist commentarial literature. First, unlike the Hindu philosophical traditions, the Buddhists did not accept scripture (āgama) as a valid means of knowing (pramāṇa); they only accepted perceptual encounter (pratyakṣa) and its explication, including the formal procedures of inference (anumāṇa). Why then are Sūtras and śāstras so frequently quoted? Simply because they often make the point as well as it could be made; it could not have been said better. Of course, an author will also cite older texts to lend credence to his particular interpretation, but this in itself would never be recognized as a valid argument. It must also be remembered that the Sūtras themselves were subjected to an evaluation as to whether their meaning was explicit or required interpretation. So even claims of orthodoxy for a certain position based on scripture, although accepted, would still be subjected to this evaluation. For example, in Tibet, the issue regarding the evaluation of the Sūtras and śāstras of the Second and Third Dharmacakras has never been settled. Some say that the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras and their Mādhyamika interpretation represents the explicit, definitive meaning of the Buddha's teaching, while texts belonging to the Third Dharmacakra, which teach such subjects as ālaya-vijñāna and Tathāgatagarbha, require further interpretation. Others hold the reverse; that the Third Dharmacakra is definitive (see Klong-chen-pa, Grub-mtha'-mdzod, published by Dodrup Chen Rinpoche, Gangtok, Sikkim, n.d., p. 33).

Second, Western philosophy, at least of the Anglo-American variety, has largely degenerated into the program of resolving all philosophical problems through clearing up confusions said to be caused by the unwitting use of words in ways not sanctioned by ordinary usage. Furthermore, any thinking that does not simply proceed through the cut-and-dried method of proving one's premises and consistently deducing one's conclusions from them is not considered

worthy of the name philosophy. Now, Buddhist philosophy, particularly of the Indian variety, was also particularly fond of the argumentative style of philosophizing. But Buddhist philosophers also clearly recognized that certain philosophical problems, and indeed the most important, were not subject to such a procedure. That is, philosophizing may enter a realm where nothing can be proven, although a good deal may be pointed out (Heidegger). This 'pointing out' is accomplished, in Buddhist texts, through a skillful building up of images intending to guide the reader towards fuller comprehension. An example would be the ten similes for the Tathāgatagarbha in the Uttaratantra. Quotations are also used in this way; each quotation presents a further facet of the 'gem' one is trying to point out. They are not arguments from analogy to prove certain propositions.

13. Why are saṃsāra, the potentialities for experience, and the lack of intrinsic perceptivity often said to be 'beginningless'? One might suggest the following: although there is a 'dimming' of intrinsic perceptivity by virtue of the operation of the potentialities for experience, since Being-as-such cannot decrease (or increase), this 'dimming' still represents a total response to Being, albeit in the 'defective form' of objectivizing experience and 'creating' all sorts of 'things'. This limitation, with its attendant feeling of incompleteness, leads to the constant search for 'something more'. There is an 'end' to saṃsāra in the sense that there is 'nothing more' to search for once the initial limitation has been transcended.

14. The gSang-ba'i snying-po (Guhya-garbha-tantra) is the main text of the Mahāyoga class of Nyingma Inner Tantras (rNying-rgyud) that were excluded from the later compilations of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.

15. 'khrul-snang. This involves the creation of fictitious duplicates to what is presented to us (snang-ba), taking this presence to be the presence of something existing in-itself. See below, note 25.

16. The Pramāṇa-vārttika (Tshad-ma rnam-'grel) is the greatest work of Indian Buddhist epistemology and logic, written by Dharmakīrti (seventh century). It reflects the Indian predilection for inquiry into the 'valid means of knowing' (tshad-ma, pramāṇa).

17. sems. This is a term for the intensive structure of mind, analyzed into acts of consciousness (*noeses*), and their intended meanings (*noemata*).

18. Ratnamālā (Rin-chen 'phreng-ba) is a work by Nāgārjuna giving advice to a king on the realization of the Dharma.

19. goms-pa. In Western psychology, habituation can refer to the tendency for the subject's level of attention to drop off after repeated contacts with the same object.

20. Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra (mDo-sde rgyan) is Maitreya's encyclopedic treatise on the Mahāyāna path from the standpoint of the Cittamātra (Sems-tsam) trend of thought, which held that objects do not exist apart from mind.

21. Maitreya, the future Buddha of this Aeon, is the reputed author of the five Treatises which he transmitted to Asaṅga, i.e., the Abhisamayālaṅkāra,

Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra, Dharma-dharmatā-vibhaṅga, Madhyānta-vibhaṅga, and Uttaratantra. The question of Maitreya's historicity and the authorship of these five texts and their commentaries is actively debated among Western specialists. Understood in light of their views, it is most likely that Asaṅga put together most of these works from previous materials and his own ideas under the "inspiration" (byin-rlabs) of Maitreya, which enabled him to actualize (mngon-du-gyur, adīṣṭhāna) them in his mind. Cf. Ruegg, D. S., *La Théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra*, Paris, École Française D'Extrême Orient, 1969, pp. 54–55.

22. The arguments that follow in the text point out the absurdities in claiming that all appearances are mental. Certainly everything must be presented to an experiencing subject; how we experience (snang-ba)—the either implicit or explicit 'seeing-as'—is a mental process (sems). This does not mean, however, that what is presented is one's own mind, or that there is some universal Mind. The Cittamātra position is a corrective to earlier common-sense notions that the commonality of presences before several individuals is due to a single, public external object. This is a mere belief. The basis for this belief is precisely the commonality of presences before different individuals. The realist confuses perceptions (presences) with beliefs or hypotheses (themselves presences of another type, which, of course, have their relative practical validity). The issue here is not one of 'practical validity' (kun-rdzob), i.e., what is commonly accepted, but of man's obsession with his beliefs and their emotional underpinnings, which bring him so much misery. In regard to this level of questioning (don-dam) regarding what is primary in our existence, we are not very practical at all.

Our habitual ways of perceiving (bag-chags) are built up through inter-subjective experience, so that we all have our typical human ways of experiencing. The Cittamātra texts are fond of pointing out that what is water to us is the elixir of longevity to the gods. The bag-chags lead to the split (rtog-pa) into a world of apprehendable objects and apprehending subjects. But, we must emphasize again, in denying that these apprehendable objects are not one's mind, Klong-chen-pa is not retreating to a realist position. Rather, he states that they are a presence without any actuality (rang-bzhin-med), like a reflection in a mirror or a mirage. These presences are not what we take them to be (bden-med). Their fact of being, which the realist likes to explain in terms of atoms or whatever, is simply no-thing (stong-pa), yet a wondrous, and all too easily deceptive, presence.

These apprehendable objects, since they have no actuality, cannot even be grounded as being mental, for mind as we understand it makes no sense without anything to apprehend. Mind is a symptom of the disease called mistaken presencing. It will, however, let itself be cured of its incidental sickness, for mind, too, is not what it is taken to be. Try to locate the symptom and see if you can surgically remove it!

23. snang-srid. sNang-ba denotes presence or thereness, and srid-pa, 'what you do with it'. Srid-pa, 'becoming', is the tenth member of the wheel of

functional correlation, coming before *skye-ba*, 'birth'. It indicates that individual existence is pro-jective, so that one is always 'ahead of oneself', 'sketching out' possible ways to be. To put it simply: we are constantly being born into a world that we have already created for ourselves.

24. The Mīmāṃsakas were one of the six major schools (*darśana*) of Hindu philosophy. The Buddhist rejected both the notions that consciousness could arise from 'contact' of inert 'elements' (materialist), and that these 'elements' themselves had consciousness (objective idealist).

25. What is crucial here is the obsessiveness (*zhen-pa*) of the mistaken mode of presencing, the obsession for objects which are held to exist 'in truth' (*bden-grub*), i.e., exist as we take them to be. P. Ricoeur states beautifully, "In experience we are already on the level of a perception shot through with a 'thesis', that is to say with a believing that posits its object as being. *We live through perception in giving credit to the vehemence of presence, if I may use such language, to the point of forgetting ourselves or losing ourselves in it.*" (P. Ricoeur, *Husserl, An Analysis of his Phenomenology*, Northwestern Univ. Press, Evanston, Ill.: 1967, p. 40, emphasis added.) 'Khrul-srang applies both to valid and invalid perceptions in our everyday world; both can be equally obsessive. On *zhen-yul* and *snang-yul* see Mi-pham, *mKhas-'jug*, f. 16a.

26. This is one of the Ratnakūṭa group of Sūtras (see next note).

27. The Ratnakūṭa (*dKon-brtsegs*) is the name given to a collection of forty-nine Mahāyāna Sūtras.

28. *Datura* is known in the Western United States as Jimson or 'loco' weed.

29. This is one of the greatest Mahāyāna Sūtras, which is said to represent the Mādhyamika point of view.

Suggested Readings

Vinaya

Buddhist Monastic Discipline: The Sanskrit Prātimokṣa Sūtras of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Mūlasarvāstivādins, edited by Charles S. Prebish. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975.

Guidelines for Buddhist monks; a foundation Vinaya text.

The Life of the Buddha and the Early History of His Order, by W. H. Rockhill. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1884.

Sūtras

Buddhist Mahayana Texts, edited by F. Max Müller. New York: Dover, 1969.

Contains translations of the Buddhacarita, chapters 1–17, the larger and smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha Sūtras, the Diamond and Heart Sūtras, and the Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra.

Buddhist Texts Through the Ages, translated by E. Conze et al. Boston: Shambhala, 1990.

Buddhist Suttas, translated from the Pāli by T. W. Rhys-Davids. New York: Dover, 1969.

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Includes a translation of Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā.

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Collection of thirty of the longest discourses of the Buddha on the theoretical and practical aspects of the Dharma.

Madhyama Āgama. Translated by I. B. Horner as *The Middle Length Sayings*. 3 vols. London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1954–59.

A collection of 150 Sūtras of intermediate length discussing the topics important to early Buddhism.

Samyukta Āgama. Translated by C. A. F. Rhys Davids and F. L. Woodward as *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*. 5 vols. London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1917–30.

A collection of short Sūtras arranged by topic: the truths, mindfulness, sense, dependent origination, etc.

Ekottarra Āgama. Translated by E. M. Hare and F. L. Woodward as *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*. 5 vols. London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1932–36.

The second of the collections of short Sūtras of the Pāli canon.

Khadgaviṣṇānagāthā. Translated by R. Chalmers in *Buddha's Teaching, Being the Sutta-Nipāta or Discourse-Collection*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 37. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.

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Śailagāthā. Translated by R. Chalmers in *Buddha's Teachings, Being the Sutta-Nīpata or Discourse-Collection*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 37. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.

A dialogue in verse between the Buddha and a Brahmin named Śaila.

Arthavargyāni Sūtrāṇi. Translated by R. Chalmers in *Buddha's Teachings, the Sutta-Nīpata or Discourse-Collection*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 37. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.

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Pārāyaṇa. Translated by R. Chalmers in *Buddha's Teaching, Being the Sutta-Nīpata or Discourse-Collection*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 37. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.

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The rules of conduct and discipline which form the foundation of Theravāda monastic life. Presented as discourses of the Buddha.

Abhidharma Piṭaka

Vibhaṅga. Translated by U Thiṅṅila as *The Book of Analysis*. London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1969.

Analyses of the aggregates, elements, dependent origination, foundations of mindfulness, etc.

Dhātukathā. Translated by U Narada as *Discourse on Elements*. Pali Text Society Translation Series, vol. 34. London: Luzac and Co., Ltd., 1962.

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Index

- Abhayākara Gupta ('Jigs-med 'Byung-gnas-sbas-pa), 118
Abhidharma, 27, 35–41, 91
 in Tibet, 148–150
Abhidharma-kośa, 36, 38, 63, 67–68, 70, 149, 336
Abhidharma-kośa-bhāṣya, 40, 68, 82
Abhidharma-kośa-vṛtti-marmapradīpa, 71
Abhidharmāmṛta-śāstra, 37
Abhidharma-samuccaya, 38, 63, 82, 148, 218
Abhidharma-samuccaya-vyākhyā, 38
Abhidharmāvatāra, 39, 66
Abhisamayālamkāra (mNgon-rtogs-rgyan), 81, 82, 87–88, 151–154
Abhisamayālamkāraloka, 150
Abu (Mt.), 89
Acala, 83
Acinta, 104
Ādibuddha, xiii, 161, 189, *passim*
A-'dzom 'Brug-pa (Rig-'dzin-sna-tshogs-rang-grol), 254, 284, 286–288
Āgama, 29
Arapura Monastery, 77
A-'gyur Rinpoche ('Gyur-med rDo-rje), 293–295
Ajaṅṭā, 44, 46–47, 53, 83
Ajātaśatru, King, 25, 42, 126
Ajoki, 105
Akaṇiṣṭha, 189
Akāśagarbha (Nam-mkha'i-snying-po), 89
Akṣara-śataka, 92
Akṣayamatīrdeśa-sūtra, 68
ālabana, 83
Ālabana-parīkṣā, 83
ālaya-vijñāna (kun-gzhi rnam-par shes-pa), 34, 63, 78, 79, 80, 98, 337, 343
Alexander the Great, 45
Amarāvati, 44, 84
America, xi–xi
Amitābha Buddha, 118, 237
Amitāyus, 54
Ānanda, 17, 26–27, 39, 57, 265
Anaximander of Miletia, 123
Antivāhana, King, 59
Anuttara-yoga-tantras (Bla-na-med-pa'i rnal-'byor), 56, 110, 164, 165–167
Anuyoga (Lung-anuyoga'i theg-pa, mDo), 169–170, 224–232
(Anyā-) Apoha-prakarāṇa, 84
Arabs, 49
Ārāḍa-kālāma, 10
Arhats, 85
 sixteen, 24
Aruṇāśva (Ārjuna), 113
Āryadeva ('Phags-pa'i-lha), 40, 53, 63–66, 90, 91–92, 182

- Arya-maitreya-sādhana, 60
 Arya-rāṣṭrapāla-paripṛcchā-nāma-sūtra, 347
 Asaṅga (Thogs-med), 38, 53, 60–63, 68, 69, 79, 81, 82, 87, 89, 100
 Asita (Nag-po), 7
 Aśoka, 28, 31, 44–46
 Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, 86
 Aśvaghoṣa, 36, 40
 Atīṣa (Dīpaṅkāra Śrījñāna, dPal Mar-me-mdzad-ye-shes), 114, 145, 153, 229
 Atiyoga (rDzogs-pa-chen-po), 130, 170, 177, *et. seq.*
 Avalokiteśvara (sPyan-ras-gzigs), 54, 89, 126, 189, 195, 218, 243
 Avataṃsaka-sūtra (Hwa-Yen, Phal-po-che), 56, 80–81, 336
 Avitarka, 89, 90
 bag-chags (vāsanā, potentialities of experience), 337–338
 Balin, Ācārya, 167
 Balin, King, 54, 56
 bar (middle world), 123
 sBa-sgom, Ācārya, 236–237
 dBas Mañjuśrī, 151
 dBas Ye-shes-rgyal, 149
 Bhadrāpa, 105
 Bhattācārya, 75–76
 Bhāvaviveka (Bhavya), 28, 33, 92, 93, 96
 Bhelakirti (Bi-le-le-ti), 180
 Bhutan, 251
 Bi-ma snying-thig, 171, 248
 Bimbisāra, King, 41–42, 126
 Bla-chen dGongs-pa-rab-gsal, 141–143
 Bla-ma Rig'dzin, 255
 Bla-ma Sro, 218
 Bla-ma yang-tig, 248
 Blo-ldan-shes-rab (rNgog Lo-tsā-ba), 87
 Blo-gsal-ba, 147
 Blue Notes (Reg-zegs sngon-po), 151
 Bodh Gayā (Vajrāsana), 13, 58, 90, 165, 167, 171, 179, 182, 184, 198
 Bodhicaryāvatāra, 94, 338
 Bodhicitta, 34, 84
 Bodhisattva (Byang-chub-sems-dpa'), 36
 Bodhisattvayāna, 85, 160, 162
 Bodhi tree, 13, 111
 Bon (-po), 123, 124, 133–134, 199, 228
 Brahmajāla-sūtra, 35
 Brang-ti-dar-ma sNying-po, 149, 150
 'bras-bu rgyud, 162–163
 'Bre Khro-chung-pa, 209–210
 'Bre Shes-rab-'bar, 145, 153
 'Bri-gung-skyob-pa (Rin-chen-dpal), 102, 145
 'Brog-mi, 210
 'Brom-ston rGyal-ba'i-'byung-gnas ('Brom-ston-pa), 153
 Buddha, qualities of, 18–19
 Buddha Families, Five (rgyal-tshab-rigs-lnga), 189
 Buddhāmitra, 66
 Buddha (-overall) -intentionality, Lineage (tradition) of (rgyal-ba dgongs-brgyud), 171, 189, 196
 Buddhadeva (Sangs-rgyas-lha), 37, 39, 51
 Buddhaguhyā (Sangs-rgyas gSang-ba), 113, 163, 167, 185, 188, 195–197, 238
 Buddhajñānapāda (Sangs-rgyas Ye-shes-zhabs), 97, 113, 165, 196
 Buddhāmitra, 39, 66, 69
 Buddhapakṣa, 56
 Buddhapālita, 91, 92
 Buddhaśānti, 113
 Buddhasīmha, 38
 dBus-lugs-pa (School of dBus), 196
 Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub-pa, 147, 149, 153, 192, 218

- Bya-khri-btsan-po, 124
 Byang-chub-'od, 145
 Byang-chub-ye-shes of Ar, 153
- Cakrasaṃvara-tantra, 110–167
 Camaripa, 104
 Campā, 42
 Candragupta, 44–46, 110
 Candrakīrti, 57, 91, 93–94
 Candrapāla, 90
 Cang-ra-ba, 156
 Caryā-tantra (sPyod-pa'i-rgyud),
 163–164
 caste system, 41
 Catrapa, 104
 Catuḥśataka, 63, 92
 Chag dGra-bcom, 146
 Che-mchog Heruka, Buddha Kun-
 bzang, 171
 Che-mchog Sādhana, 268
 China, 28, 49, 112, 121, 132, 135
 mChims Nam-mkha'-grags, 150
 mChims-phu, 137, 151, 187, 223
 mChims brTson-seng, 150
 mChog-gyur bDe-chen-zhig-po-
 gling-pa, 263
 mChog-sprul Rinpoche (Dar-thang
 mChog-sprul Chos-kyi-zla-ba),
 254, 289, 294–297
 chos-bcu-bzhi (Fourteen Treatises
 of Buddhajñāna), 167
 Chos-kyi-blo-gros, 226
 Chos-kyi-bshes-gnyen, 33
 Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug (Guru), 254,
 261, 262
 Chos-kyi-dpal-ba, 149
 Chos-kyi-khu-'gyur gSal-ba'i-mchog,
 235
 Chos-kyi-seng-ge (rNgog-thog-pa),
 220–221
 Cittamātra (Sems-tsam), 80
 gCod, 222
 Cog-ro-klu'i rGyal-mtshan, 136, 140,
 148, 149, 151, 155, 186, 187, 201
 Cog-ro Zangs-dkar-mdzod-khur, 232
 bCom-ldan-rig-ral, 145, 150
 controlling powers, five, 21
 cosmic egg (sgo-nga chen-po gcig),
 122–123
 Council at Pāṭaliputra, Second, 28
 Council at Pāṭaliputra, Third, 28
 Council at Rājagṛha, First, 25–27
 Council at Vaiśālī, Second, 27–28, 30
 Cūḍāmaṇi, 73
- bDag-nyid-chen-po bKra-shis-rgya-
 mtsho, 222
 Ḍākinī language, 81, 259
 Dalai Lama, Fifth (Ngag-dbang Blo-
 bzang-rgya-mtsho), 147, 278
 Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas, 188
 Dam-pa sBor-mang, 215
 Dam-pa Se-brag-pa, 215
 Daṃṣṭrasena, 151
 Dānaśīla, 140
 lDang-ma lHun-rgyal, 210, 242, 248
 Dar-ma-mgon-po, 245
 Dar-rje dPal-gyi-grags-pa, 196
 Darṣṭāntikas (dPe-ston-ba), 40
 Dar-thang mChog-ksprul Chos-kyi-zla-
 ba (mChog-sprul Rinpoche), 275
 Dar-thang (Tarthang) monastery,
 274–276
 Daśabhūmika-sūtra, 63, 80
 Daśabhūmika-śāstra, 68
 bDe-ba-gsal-mdzad (Sukhaprasanna),
 225
 Deb-ther sngon-po (Blue Annals),
 173, 217
 bDe-gshegs-'dus-pa, 267–268
 Demetrius (I and II), 49
 Devadatta, 8
 Devānāmpīya Tissa, 45
 Devapāla, 113
 Developing Stage (bskyed-rim), 105,
 165, 192
 Devendrabuddhi, 76, 83
 Dhamekh Stūpa, 15

- Dhanarakṣita, 225
 dharma(s), 28
 meaning of word, 19
 Dharmabodhi (Bodhidharma), 224, 225
 Dharmacakras (Wheel of Dharma), Three, 98–103
 Dharma-dharmatā-vibhaṅga (Chos dang chos-nyid rnam-'byed), 81, 339
 Dharmadhātu (chos-kyi-dbyings), 189, 192
 Dharmākara, Kun-mkhyen, 149
 Dharmakāya (Chos-sku), xiii, 161, 189, 217, 342
 Dharmakīrti (gSer-gling-pa), 53, 73–77, 83–84, 96
 Dharmakīrti (the Second), 135
 Dharmamitra, 78
 Dharmāṅkūra Vihāra, 63
 Dharmapāla, King, 78, 113, 150, 167, 241
 Dharmapāla (Śrī), 78, 83, 144, 146
 Dharmarājapāla, 225
 Dharmarakṣita, 225
 Dharmasrī, 37
 Dharmatrāta (Chos-skyob), 37, 39
 Dharmodgata, 90
 Dharmottara, 83–84
 Dhītika, 31
 Diamond Bridge, 235, 237–238
 Dignāga (Blo-gros-brtan-pa), 53, 70–73, 74, 83–84, 92, 96
 Direct Transmission, 188
 Divyākara-gupta, 89
 mDo-dgongs-pa-'dus-pa'i-mdo, 225
 Dohā, Three Cycles of, 110
 mDo, 172
 rDo-ba Grub-chen, 280
 mDo'i-don-bsdu-ba, 225
 mDo mKhyen-brtse'i Ye-shes rDo-rje, 281
 Dol-po-pa, 102
 sDom-gsum-rab-dbye, 35
 rDo-rje-brag monastery, 264, 273
 rDo-rje-'chang (Vajradhara), 164, 166
 rDo-rje-chos-rab, Rig-'dzin, 172–173
 rDo-rje-gling-pa, 262
 rDo-rje-grags-po-rtsal, 266–267
 rDo-rje-sems-dpa'-nam-mkha'i-mtha'-dang-mnyam-pa'i-rgyud-chen-po, 235
 rDo-rje-sems-dpa'-sgyu-'phrul-dra-ba, 187
 rDo-rje zam-pa (Diamond Bridge), 235, 237–238
 drang-don (neyārtha, implicit meaning), 97, 99–103
 Dṛṣṭāntamālā-śāstra, 7
 bDud-'dul-gling-pa, 263
 bDud-rtsi-yon-tan, 260
 Durdhaṣakāla, 64, 65
 bsDus-don-ma-rig-mun-sel, 192
 Dvādaśadvara-śāstra, 91
 'Dzeng Dharmabodhi, 237–238
 'Dzeng Jo-sras, 238
 mDzod bdun (Seven Treasures of Klong-chen-pa), 250, 297
 rDzogs-chen (rDzogs-pa-chen-po, Atiyoga), 97, 170
 rDzogs-chen monastery, 271, 275
 rDzogs-pa-chen-po'i-lta-sgom man-ngag, 231
 rDzogs-pa chen-po sde-gsum, 170–171
 rDzogs-chen rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas, 148
 rDzong-gsar Monastery, 148
 Eighteen Schools, 28–30
 Ekottara-karmaśataka (Las-brgya-rtsa-gcig), 78
 factors of enlightenment, seven (byang-chub-kyi yan-lag-'dun, bodhyaṅga), 22
 Five Doctrines of Maitreya, 62, 63, 81, 246

- Fortunate Aeon, 3, 16
 four seals, 164
 Fulfillment Stage, 105, 165
- Ga-ga-si-dhi, 225
 sGam-po-pa, 145
 Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra, 80
 Gandhāra, 37, 39, 45, 51, 60, 66, 90
 Gandhavatī, 90
 Gang-mo, 237
 dGa'-rab rDo-rje, 170, 173–174, 175–
 179, 187, 225, 233, 238
 'Gar-ston Tshul-khrims-bzang-po, 229
 Ga-ya-su-tri, 224
 dGe-ba-rab-gsal, 142
 dGe-bsnyen Li-tsā-bi Dri-med-grags,
 224
 dGe-mang movement, 148
 Ghanasa, 90
 Ghoṣaka (dByangs-sgrog), 37, 39
 Glang Dar-ma, 140, 143, 152, 228
 Glan Śākya-byang-chub, 213
 Gom-ma-devī, 195
 Gom-mi-'chi-med, 87
 sGom-pa, Ācārya, 245
 sGong-dri-ngas-pa Nye-ston Chos-kyi-
 seng-ge, 218
 Gopā (Sa-'tsho-ma), 7–9, 17
 Gopāla, 78, 113
 Go-rong-seng-ge, 143
 Go-rub Lo-tsā-ba dGe-slong Chos-kyi-
 shes-rab, 230
 Gorura, 105
 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu-dpal, 149,
 153, 221
 Grags-se-ba, 245
 Great Mādhyamika (dBu-ma
 chen-po), 156
 Greeks, 46, 49
 Gri-gum-btsan-po, 124
 Gro-lung-pa Blo-gros-'byung-gnas,
 154
 sGro-sbug-pa, 209, 213–215, 234
 Ground of Being (gzhi), 352
- Gru Legs-pa'i-sgron-ma, 207, 226
 sGrub-chen Me-long-rdo-rje, 244–245
 Grub-mchog-gi-ye-shes, 149
 sgrub-pa (meditation practice), 69
 Grub-rgyal-ba'i-ye-shes, 149
 Grum Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan, 143
 Guhya-mūla-garbha-tantra (sGyu-
 'phrul-gsang-ba-snying-po), 146,
 187, 191–192
 Guhyapati (gSang-ba'i bdag-po),
 89, 90
 Guhyapatrī, 194
 Guhyasamāja-tantra, 97, 110, 118,
 165, 167
 Guṇamati, 78, 146
 Guṇamitra, 152
 Guṇāparyanta-stotra, 71
 Guṇaprabha (Yon-tan-'od), 33, 53,
 77, 111, 146
 Gu-ne-ru (Guṇeru), 165
 Gupta Dynasty, 51, 110–111
 Gu-ru Jo-'ber, 243, 244
 rGyal-ba mChog-dbyangs, 198
 rGyal-mo-rong, 203–204
 rGyal-sras gZhan-phan-mtha'-yas,
 281, 282, 285
 rGyal-tshab, 149
 Gye-re mChog-skyong, 196
 rGyud-kyi rnam-bshad (Klong-chen-
 pa'i gSang-snying-'grel-pa), 223
 sGyu, 172
 sGyu-'phrul, 192, 196, 207, 209
 'Gyur-med rDo-rje (A-'dzom rGyal-
 sras 'Gyur-med-rdo-rje), 254,
 293–295
- lHa, 123, 125
 lHa-lung dPal-gyi-rdo-rje, 149
 lHan-du-tsha-po, 226
 Haribhadra (Seng-ge-bzang-po), 97,
 113, 150
 lHa-rje lHa-khang-pa, 215
 lHa-rje mNga'-seng-ge, 220
 lHa-rje rJe-ston-rgya-nag, 214

- lHa-rje Shangs-pa-nag-po, 213
 Harṣavardhana, King, 77, 111–112
 Harwan, 31
 Hastavala-prakaraṇa, 63, 92
 lHa-tho-tho-ri gNyan-btsan, 124, 125
 Heidegger, Martin, 351–354
 Hephthalites, 111
 Heruka Sādhanas, Eight, 169, 210, 256, 265–270, 296
 Hetubindu, 76
 Hetu-cakra-ḍamaru, 83
 Hevajra system, 245
 Hevajra-tantra, 110, 167
 Hīnayāna, 38, 205
 Hinduism, 114–115
 Hsüan-tsang, 40, 111, 112
 Hūmkāra (rDo-rje Hum-mdzad), 225, 269
 Indrabodhi (Indrabhūti) the Elder (King rGyal-po-ra-dza), 190–192, 194, 195, 224, 241
 Indrabodhi the Middle, King, 186, 194
 Indrabodhi the Younger (Śatraputri), 224
 Inner Tantras (nang-rgyud), 161–162, 167–171
 Īśvarasena, 73, 83
 I-tsing, 121
 'ja'-lus (rainbow body), 224, 273
 Jambudvīpa, 4–5, 56
 'Jam-dbyangs bSam-grub-rdo-rje, 218–219
 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i-dbang-po, 130, 223, 263–264, 281, 283–285, 288, 292
 'Jam-dbyangs mKhyen-brtse'i dbang-po, the Second (Chos-kyi-blo-gros), 224, 254, 288, 291–293
 'Jam-dpal-bshes-gnyen (Mañjuśrimitra), 166, 174, 179–182, 238
 'Jam-dpal-sku (gshin-rje), 256
 'Jam-mgon sKong-sprul Blo-gromtha'-yas, 130, 264, 284–286
 Jayākara, 146
 rJe-btsun Seng-ge-dbang phyug, 242
 rJe-sgom Nag-po, 242
 rJe Śākya-mchog, 209
 'Jigs-med-gling-pa, 188, 254, 263, 276, 279
 'Jigs-med-'phrin-las-'od-zer, 281
 'Jigs-med-rgyal-ba'i-myu-gu, 280, 281, 283
 'Jigs-rtēn-mchos-bstod, 262
 Jinamitra, 86, 87, 131, 148, 149, 151
 Jñānagarbha, Paṇḍita, 33, 155
 Jñāna-prasthāna, 37
 Jñānaśrīmati, 153
 Jñānaśrīmitra, 97
 Jñānasūtra (Ye-shes-mdo), 174
 Jñānatāla, 89
 Jo-mo Myang-mo, 215
 Jo-nang Dol-po-pa-shes-rab rGyal-mtshan, 156
 sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs, 136; 138, 148, 149, 151, 186, 187
 Ka-ba 'Od-mchog, 143
 bKa'-ma Transmission, 167–168, 171–188
 Kah-dam-pa-bde-gshegs, 196, 212, 224, 264, 273
 Kaḥ-thog monastery, 196, 265, 273, 288
 Kaḥ-thog Siddha Chos-kyi-rgya-mtsho, 223–224, 226, 287, 288, 292
 Kailāśa, 196
 Kakuguha, 75
 Kālacakra, 56
 Kālacakra-tantra, 167, 218
 Kālasiddhi, 251, 257
 Kāli Yuga, 3
 Kalinga, 44
 kalpa, 3

- Kamalagarbha, 90
 Kamalaśīla, 87, 95–97, 113, 151
 Kamaripa, 105
 bKa'-mchims-phu-ba, 196
 bKa'-mchims-phu-ma, 223, 226
 Kanagupta, 75
 Kaṅkana, 105
 Kaṅka, 36, 51
 Kantali, 104
 Kapilavāstu, 7, 16, 195, 241
 dKar-chag-ldan-dkar-ma, 138
 Karma-gling-pa, 262
 Kashmir (Kha-che), 28, 30–32, 39,
 45, 51, 66, 68, 73, 84, 130, 135,
 146, 186
 Kāśyapaparivarta (Ratnakūṭa), 82
 Kātyāyanīputra, 36, 37
 Kauśāmbī, 45
 Kha-che Paṅ-chen (Śākyaśrībhadrā),
 146
 Kha-che Vinaya lineage, 130, 144,
 146–147
 mKha'-gro yang-tig, 247
 mKha'-gro snying-thig, 246
 Khams-lugs-pa (School of Khams),
 196
 mKhan-chen Legs-bshad-'byor-ldan,
 226
 mKhan-po Ngag-dga' (mKhan-po
 Ngag-dbang-dpal-bzang),
 148, 289
 mKhan-po Thub-dga', 226
 mKhar-chen dPal-gyi-dbang-phyug,
 229
 mKhas-grub-rje, 83
 mKhas-pa Nyi-'bum, 243
 'Khon Klu'i-dbang-po-bsrung-ba (Ye-
 shes dBang-po-srung), 138
 bKra-shis khye-dren, 252, 257
 Khri-btsun (Princess), 132
 Khri-srong-lde-btsan, King, 133–138,
 150, 151, 186, 187, 197–203,
 206, 232, 233, 242, 269
 wives of, 200
 Khro-phu Lo-tsā-ba Byams-pa-dpal,
 146
 'Khrul-zhig Seng-ge-rgyal-po, 244
 Khu Byang-chub-'od, 232
 Khu-chen lHa-ldings-pa, 153
 Khu-lung-pa Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, 226
 Khyung-ma Sak-dar, 245
 Khyung-po dByig-'od, 232
 Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa, Kun-
 mkhyen (Dri-med-'od-zer, Tshul-
 khri-ma Blo-gros, rDo-rje
 gZi-brjid), 148, 156, 170, 171,
 188, 192, 223, 246–254
 Klong-chen-snying-thig, 279–280
 Klong-gi-sde (Section on the Unend-
 ing Experience of Being of
 Atiyoga), 170, 232, 233, 234–238
 Klu-mes, 143–144
 Ko-bo Ye-shes-byung-gnas, 150
 bKol-mdo, 225
 Kong-jo (Princess), 132
 Koṭali, 104
 Kriyā-tantra (Bya-ba'i-rgyud), 163, 164
 Kṛkin, King, 28
 Kṛṣṇa, 31, 90
 Kṛṣṇamunirāja, 72
 Kṣaṇabhaṅga-siddhi, 84
 Kṣitigarbha (Sa'i sNying-po), 89
 Kṣitigarbha (Ācārya), 186
 Kuchā, 92
 Kucipa, 105
 sku dang ye-shes, 189, 352
 Ku-ku-rā-dza, Siddha, 192–194, 224
 Ku-ma-rāja, Rig-'dzin, 221
 Kukkuripa, 105
 Kulika, 89
 Kumārajīva, 86, 87, 92
 Kumāralāta, 40–41
 Kumāralīla, 75
 Kumārilabhaṭṭa, 115
 Kun-bzang, Ācārya, 238
 Kun-bzang bla-ma'i-zhal-lung, 283
 Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan (Kun-dpal),
 287, 290, 298

- Kun-'dus-rig-pa'i-mdo, 224
 Kun-tu-bzang-mo (Samantabhadri),
 169
 Kun-tu-bzang-po (Samantabhadra),
 xiii, 170–172, 189, 265
 Kusali, 153
 Kuṣāṇas, 49, 51
 Kuśinagara, 16–18
- Lakṣāśva, King, 89
 Lalitāditya, 115
 Lam-'bras-pa (Path and Fruit doctrine), 223
 lam-rgyud, 162–163
 Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra, 54, 56, 80, 99–100
 Las-kyi-dbang-mo-che, Dākinī, 172,
 174, 266
 Las-'phro-gling-pa (Ngag-dbang-chos-
 rgyal-dbang-po), 263
 Li-bza' Shes-rab-sgron-ma, 233
 Licchavi Clan, 42, 110, 126
 Līlavajra (sGeg-pa-rdo-rje), 165, 194–
 196
 Lineage, 163, 195, 299–302, *passim*
 Lineage of Precepts (Man-ngag-
 brgyud), 196
 Lineage of Rog, 223
 Lineages of Transmission, Nine, 168–
 169
 Li-tsā-bi, 194
 Lo-chen Dharma Śrī, 147, 156, 192,
 279
 logic, 70, 83–84
 Lo-ston rDo-rje-dbang-phyug, 143
 Lumbinī, 7, 45
 lung (oral teachings), 32, 69
 Lūyipa, 105
- rMa Rin-chen-mchog, 146, 186, 187,
 196, 204, 207, 232
 Macedonian Empire, 46
 sMad Vinaya lineage, 130, 143, 144,
 147–148
 Madhyamaka, 63, 88–91, 170
 Madhyamaka-avatāra-pradīpa, 92
 Madhyamaka-hṛdaya, 92
 Madhyamakālamkāra (dBu-margyan),
 154–155
 Madhyamaka-prajñāvatāra, 94
 Madhyamaka-ratna-pradīpa, 92
 Madhyamakārtha-saṅgraha, 92
 Madhyamakāvātāra, 94
 Mādhyamika, 34, 58, 79–80, 86, 90,
 98, 337–339
 in Tibet, 154–157
 Madhyānta-vibhaṅga, 81
 Madhyāntika (Nyi-ma-gung-ba), 30
 Magadha, 41, 42, 115
 Mahādeva, 28, 65
 Mahākāla, 65
 Mahākāśyapa, 25, 27, 33, 39
 Mahā-Lakṣmī, 165
 Mahāmāti, 80
 Mahāmāyūrī Tantra, 53
 Mahāmudrā (Phyag-rgya-chen-po),
 164–165, 237, 243–245
 Mahāsāṃghika, 28, 29, 79
 Mahāsiddhas, Eighty-four, 103–110
 Mahāsudarśana, 31
 Mahāvastu, 84
 Mahāvibhāsā (Abhidharma-mahā-
 vibhāsā-śāstra), 37, 40, 51, 148
 Mahāyāna, *passim*
 Mahāyāna-saṅgraha, 63, 82
 Mahāyāna-śraddhotpada-śāstra, 82
 Mahāyāna-sūtrālamkāra (mDo-sde
 rgyan), 345
 Mahāyoga (rGyud-mahayoga'i theg-
 pa), 169, 189–224
 Tantras, Eighteen, 190–192
 Mahmud, Sultan, 117
 Maitreya (Byams-pa), 4, 27, 38, 60,
 62–63, 68, 69, 79, 89, 345
 Malaya (Mt.), 224
 Ma-mo-rbod-stong, 261
 Mandāravā, 249, 257
 Ma-ni-bka'-bum, 126
 Manjughosa, 166

- Mañjuśrī ('Jam-dbyangs), 24, 27, 70, 71, 80, 89, 179, 189, 196
- Manjuśrī-mūla-tantra, 30, 53, 100, 145
- sMan-lung Śākya-'od (Mi-bskyod-rdorje), 221
- Man-ngag-gi-sde (Guidance Section of Atiyoga), 170–171, 188, 233, 238–254
- Man-ngag lta'ba'i phreng-ba (Garland of Views), 191
- Man-ngag-snying-thig, 187, 239
- Manoratha, 66
- Mantrayāna, 137, 161
- Māra, 10, 13
- Marks of Existence, Three, 18
- Mar-pa Lo-tśā-ba Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug, 145, 188, 226, 230
- sMar Śākya-mu-ne, 140–143
- Mathurā, 35, 42, 45, 49, 51, 77
- Mātr̥ceṭa, 65
- Mātr̥ka, 27
- Maudgalyāyana, 16
- Mauryan Empire, 44
- Māyā, Queen, 5–7
- Meditative Realization, Transmission, 168
- Menander, King (Milinda), 49
- Men from Khams, Three, 140–143
- Mes-ston-mgon-po, 218
- Middle Way (Madhyama-pratipad), 16
- Mihirakula, 111
- Milarepa (Mi-la-ras-pa), 145, 188
- Milinda-pañhā (Questions of Milinda), 49
- Mīmāṃsakas, 356
- mi-ma-yin ('non-human ones'), 122
- Mīnapa, 104
- mindfulness, 18, 20–21
- sMin-grol-gling monastery, 147, 275, 276
- Mi-pham 'Jam-dbyangs rNam-gyal-rgya-mtsho (Lama), 29, 102–103, 149, 156, 192, 254, 275, 285–287, 298, 339, 351
- mleccha, 41, 115
- dMod-pa drag-sngags, 263
- Moggaliputta Tissa, 28
- Mucilinda (Nāga king), 14, 56–57
- Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā (Prajñā-mūla), 58, 91
commentaries on, 91
- Mūlasarvāstivāda, 30, 32, 36, 45, 115
- Mūlasarvāstivādi-sramaṇera-kārikā, 78
- Mu-ne-btsan-po, 138
- Munimatālaṃkāra, 118
- Mun-sel-skor-gsum, 192, 250
- Mu-rug-btsan-po, 138
- Muslim invasion, 111, 115–118
- Mu-tig-btsan-po (Sad-na-legs), 138
- Myang Byang-chub-grags, 235–237
- Myang-nag mDo-po, 220
- Myang Shes-rab-'byung-gnas, 235, 236
- Nagadatta, 70
- Nagadhvaja, 149
- Nāgaputri (Na-ga-pu-tri), 194, 224
- Nāgārjuna (Klu-sgrub), 27, 33, 40, 53–60, 64, 81, 84, 89, 90–92, 103, 105, 260, 269
- Nāgas, 30, 56–57, 65, 84, 89, 189, 260
- Nāgasena (Klu-sde), 49
- Nag-po-pa, 229
- Nālandā, 45, 54, 56–58, 60, 65, 68–70, 75, 89, 95, 97, 111, 114, 116–118, 151, 154, 195, 225
- rNal-'byor-pa'i sgron-ma, 225
- rNal-'byor-rig-pa'i-nyi-ma, 225
- gnam (upper world), 123
- gNam-chos Mi-'gyur-rdo-rje, 296
- Nam-mkha'i-snying-po, 138, 199
- Nam-mkha'i-'jigs-med, 200
- sNa-nam rDo-rje-bdud-'joms, 229
- sNang-mdzad-grub-pa'i-rdo-rje (Sixth Zhe-chen Rab-'byams), 295, 297
- Nāropa, 105, 145, 149, 188
Six Doctrines of, 237
- sNa-tshogs rDo-rje (Lilavajra), 195
- Netrpada-śāstra, 36

- Ngal-gso skor-gsum, 250
 Ngan-lam Byang-chub-rgyal-mtshan, 235
 Ngan Yon-tan-mchog, 207, 227
 mNga'ris Paṅ-chen Padma-dbang-gi-rgyal-po, 103, 207
 nges-don (nītārtha, definitive meaning), 94–103
 rNgog Lo-tsā-ba, 145, 153, 155
 Ngor-lugs, 284
 Ni-gu-ma, 237
 Nine Yānas, 162–163
 Nirmānakāya (sPrul-sku), 161, 190
 nirvāṇa, 327, 334, 337 *et seq.*
 Northern Treasures (byang-gter), 262, 264
 gNubs-chen Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, 144, 207, 226–228, 234
 gNyags Jñānakumāra, 146, 187, 207, 232–234, 269
 gNya'khri-btsan-po, 42, 123, 125–126
 gNyan-nag dBang-grags, 209
 Nyang Indravaro, 151
 Nyang bKa'gdams-pa, 242
 Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'od-zer, 261–262
 Nyang Shes-rab-mchog, 208
 Nyang Ting-nge'dzin bzang-po, 187, 202, 232, 242, 243
 Nyang Ye-shes'byung-gnas, 208–209
 gNyan Lo-tsā-ba, 267
 gNyan-ras, Lama, 245
 nyāya, 91
 Nyāyabindu, 76, 83
 Nyāyamukha, 83
 Nyāyānusāra-śāstra, 40
 rNying-ma'i rgyud-'bum (Hundred Thousand rNying-ma Tantras), 187, 276, 279
 rNying-ma-pa, x, 97, 103, 145, 161–162, 168–171
 monasteries, 270–277, 303–319
 Nyi-ma-nyi'od-seng-ge, 192
 sNying-thig, 169, 171, 183, 224, *et seq.*
 sNying-thig-gi-gdams-pa (Heart Drop Instructions), 185, 241
 sNying-thig ya-bzhi, 250
 gNyos'byung-po, 167
 Odantapurī monastery, 113, 114, 135
 O-rgyan-gling-pa, 262
 O-rgyan gTer-dbag-gling-pa ('Gyur-med rDo-rje), 147, 156, 192, 226, 154, 274, 276 278–279
 O-rgyan-pa, siddha, 173
 Outer Tantras (phyi-rgyud), 161–167
 Pacari, 104
 Padma-mdo-sngags-bstan'dzin, 275
 Padma-gsung, 257
 Padma Rig'dzin, 270, 275
 Padma-dbang-gi-rgyal-po, 203
 Padma-gling-pa, 261
 Padmaruci, 149
 Padmasambhava, 54, 55, 63, 64, 120–121, 134–140, 156, 171, 174, 182, 191, 195–197, 203, 226, 238–240, 255–256, 259, 267–270
 disciples of, 136
 Padma Siddhi, 297, 298
 sPa-gor Blon-chen'phags-pa, 207, 226
 Pāla Dynasty, 30, 111, 113–114, 117, 151
 dPal Chu-bo-ri, 137, 140
 dPal-gsang-ba-snying-po'i-rgyud-dong-sal-byed-me-long, 192
 dPal-gyi-rdo-rje, 142
 dPal-gyi-sen-ge, 203
 dPal Lo-tsā-ba Chos-kyi-bzang-po, 146
 dPal-sprul Rinpoche, 156, 254, 282–284, 287
 dPal-yang-dag, 187
 dPal-yul monastery, 264, 269, 274
 dPal-yul Padma Nor-bu, 296
 Pañcaskandha-bhāṣya, 78
 Pañcaskandha-prakarāṇa, 94
 Pañcavastuvibhāṣa-śāstra, 37
 dPang-skong-phyag-rgya-pa, 132

- sPangs Mi-pham-mgon-po, 235–236
 Paraloka-siddhi, 84
 Paramārtha-saptati, 69
 Parāmitās (Transcendences), 34, 84
 six, 20, 36, 84
 ten, 4, 23, 327–329
 Pāramitāyāna, 84, 85
 Parinirvāṇa, x, 18, 25
 Parthia, 46
 Paścātyas, 39
 Pāṭaliputra, 28, 42, 110
 Path (lam, mārga),
 five stages of, 20–23
 noble Eightfold, 16, 20, 22
 ten stages of Bodhisattva, 20, 23
 sixteen stages, 162
 Path and Fruit doctrine (Lam-'bras-
 pa), 293
 Patriarchs, seven, 24–25, 30–32
 Pa-tshab Lo-tsā-ba, 156
 Phag-mo-gru-pa, 145, 216
 Phala rnam-gsum, 145
 'Phan dKon-mchog-rdo-rje, 150
 'Phrin-las-'brag-pa, 194
 'Phrin-las Phur-pa Sadhana, 268
 Phur-ba-'phrin-las (rDo-rje), 259
 Phya-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge, 153
 phyi-dar (later spread), 152
 sPo-ba sPrul-sku (mDo-snags-bstan-
 pa'i-nyi-ma), 103, 290, 296–298
 Prabhasthi (Pra-ba-ha-sti, Śākya-'od),
 225
 prajñā (appreciative discrimination),
 18, 20
 Prajñākara-gupta, 97, 98
 Prajñākīrti, 146
 Prajñāpāla, 146
 Prajñāpāramitā, 84–88, 98
 in Tibet, 150–154
 Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras, 58, 60, 82
 Diamond Sūtra, Three Hundred
 Line, 87
 Eight Thousand Line, 86
 Eighteen Thousand Line, 86
 Fifty Line, 87
 Five Hundred Line, 87
 Heart Sūtra, 87
 One Hundred Thousand Line, 57,
 151
 Seven Hundred Line, 86–87
 Ten Thousand Line, 86
 Twenty-Five Thousand Line, 86
 Prajñā-pradīpa (Shes-rab sgron-me),
 92
 Prajñāpti-śāstra (gDags-pa'i bstan-
 bcos), 148
 Prajñāvarman, 86
 Prakrit, 45
 Pramāṇa-parīkṣā, 84
 Pramāṇasamuccaya, 71, 73, 83
 Pramāṇavārttika (Tshad-ma rnam-
 'grel), 73–74, 76, 83, 342
 Pramāṇavārttika-ālamkāra, 97
 Pramāṇa-viniścaya, 76, 83
 Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, 92–94, 101,
 154–157
 Prasannapadā, 94
 Prātimokṣa, 27, 29, 33, 36
 pratītya-samutpāda (rten-'brel), 59
 Pratītya-samutpāda-hṛdaya-śāstra, 59
 Pratyekabuddhayāna, 98, 160
 Puṇyakīrti, 78
 Puruṣapura, 36, 51, 60, 88
 sPyi-don-yid-kyi-mun-sel, 192
 sPyi'i-khog-dbub-pa, 223
 Rab-gsal, 140
 Rāhula (Buddha's son), 9, 17, 32, 33,
 36, 57, 69, 130, 179
 Rāhulabhadra (Saraha), 54, 57, 58,
 90, 113
 Rāhulamitra, 89
 Rājagṛha, 16, 25, 26, 84
 Ral-pa-can, King, 138–140, 228
 Rang-'byung-rdo-rje, 188, 218, 231,
 245, 246
 Rang-grol-skor-gsum, 250
 Ratna-gling-pa, 262, 274, 296

- Ratnākaraśānti (Śānti-pa), 98, 118
 Ratnakīrti, 97–98
 Ratnakūṭa, 356
 Ratnamālā (Rin-chen 'phreng-ba), 342
 Ratnāvalī, 58
 Red-mda'-pa, 150
 Red Notes (Reg-zegs-dmar-po), 151
 Red Sangha, 140
 Relative truth (kun-rdzog-bden-pa, samvṛti-satya), 80
 Renunciations, four, 21
 Rig-'dzin chen-po Ku-ma-ra-dza (Kumarāja), 245, 247
 Rig-'dzin-'Ja-tshon-snying-po, 296
 Rig-'dzin Kun-bzang-shes-rab, 268, 274
 Rig-'dzin Ngag-gi-dbang-po, 266
 Rig-'dzin Padma 'phrin-las, 206
 Rig-'dzin-rgod-ldem-'phrul-can, 262, 277
 Rig-'dzin Thugs-mchog-rdo-rje, 281
 Rin-chen-bzang-po, 145, 152, 153, 164
 Rin-chen-gter-mdzod, 264, 270, 285–286, 297
 Rin-chen-rnam-rgyal, Lo-tsā-ba, 153
 Ris-med Movement, 280, 285, 286, 339
 Rlangs Khams-pa, 151
 Rog Chos-kyi-brtson-'grus, 149, 150
 Rog Śākya-'byung-gnas, 210
 Rog Shes-rab-'od, 222–223
 Ro-langs-bde-ba (dGa'-rab-rdo-rje, Vetālakṣema), 178
 Rong-ban Rin-chen-tshul-khrims, 229
 Rong-ston-chen-po Shes-bya-kun-gzigs, 153
 Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po, 155, 192, 223, 229–232
 Rūpakāya (meaningful existence), 161, 189, 342
 maṇḍala of, 189
 Ru-she bTsan-skyes, 224–226
 Rwa-Khri-bzang-'bar, 149
 sa (prthivī, earth), 123
 Sadaprarudita, 89
 Sad-na-legs, 138
 Sajjana, 155
 Śakas, 49, 51, 111
 Śaktiman, 59–60
 Śākyabuddhi, 83
 Śākya clan, 42, 126
 Śākya-bshes-gnyen, 225
 Śākyadevi, 257
 Śākya-'od (Śākyaprabha, Prabhastasi), 225
 Śākya-'od the Younger, 225
 Śākya-seng-ge, 225
 Śākyamitra, 78
 Śākyamuni (Śākya-thub-pa), 24, 31, 32
 life of, 3–18
 Śākyaprabha (Śākya-'od), 53, 78–79
 Śākyaśrībhadrā (Kha-che Paṅ-chen), 146, 188
 Śāliśūka, 45
 samādhi (meditative development), 18, 20
 Samādhirāja-sūtra, 350
 Samantabhadra (Kun-tu-bzang-po, Ādibuddha), 161, 170
 Samantabhadra (Kun-tu-bzang-po, Bodhisattva), 27, 80, 89
 Samantabhadrī (Kun-tu-bzang-mo), 169
 Samaya of Light, 40
 Saṁbandha-parīkṣā, 76
 Sambhogakāya (Longs-sku), xiii, 161, 189
 Saṁdhinirmocana-sūtra, 80, 82
 bSam-gtan bDe-chen-gling-pa, 263
 bSam-gtan-bzang-po, 150
 bSam-gtan-mig-sgron-me, 226
 Saṁkhyā, 91
 Saṁmitīya, 29
 Saṁpadin, 45
 Sāmsāra, 324, 327, 336 *et. seq.*
 Saṁtānāntara-siddhi, 76

- Samudragupta, 111
 Saṃvaracycle (Saṃvaracakra), 243–245
 bSam-yac monastery, 113, 118, 134–
 135, 144, 146, 186, 198, 246,
 252, 268
 Śānavāsika, 31
 Sañcaya-gāthā-pañjikā, 165
 Sāñchī Stūpa, 42–44
 Saṅgatala, 89
 gSang-ba snying-po, 341, 354
 Saṅghabhadra, 39, 41, 66, 70
 Sangs-pa-ras-pa, 242
 Sangs-rgyas-dags-chung, 215
 Sangs-rgyas-gling-pa, 262
 Sangs-rgyas-mgon-po, 233
 Sangs-rgyas-ras-pa, 245
 Sangs-rgyas Zhi-ba (Buddhaśānta),
 167
 gSang-ston Ye-shes-bla-ma, 233
 Śaṅkara, 115
 Śaṅkarācārya, 74–75
 Śāntarakṣita, 33, 95–97, 113, 130–
 131, 133–135, 151, 154–155, 197
 Śāntibhadra, 86
 Śāntigarbha, 135, 269
 Śāntideva, 94–95
 Śāntiprabha, 78
 Saraha (Rāhulabhadra), 54, 110
 Śāriputra, 16, 17, 45
 gSar-ma schools, 145
 Sarnāth, 15
 Sarvanivaraṇaviśkāmbhin (sGrib-pa
 rnam-par-sel), 89
 Sarvāstivādins, 28, 29, 35–40, 45, 51,
 58, 69, 92
 Sāsānian Dynasty, 51
 Saśaṅka, 111
 Sa-skya Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, 243
 Sa-skya Paṅ-chen (Sa-skya Pandita),
 35, 146, 192, 243
 Sata-upadesa (gDams-ngag
 brgya-pa), 39
 Sautrāntika (mDo-sde-pa), 39–41,
 66, 79, 83
 Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika,
 93
 Sautrāntika-vibhāṣa, 41
 Second Turning of the Wheel, 15,
 84, 353
 Seleucus Nicator, 46, 49
 Sems, 172
 Sems-sde (Mind Section of Atiyoga),
 97, 170, 232–234
 Sena Dynasty, 117
 Seng-ge-dbang-phyug (rJe-btsun), 208
 Seng-ge-dbon-po, 244
 Seng-ge-zil-gnon, 146, 147
 Seven Monks of Tibet, 135–136
 Seven Treatises of Dharmakīrti, 76,
 246
 bShad-rgyud mDo-dgongs-pa-'dus-
 pa, 224, 226
 Shalipa, 105
 Shangs-pa Jo-stan, 146
 Shangs-pa Kun-mkhyen (Sangs-rgyas-
 rin-chen-rgyal-mtshan-dpal-
 bzang-po), 220
 gShen-rab, 124
 Shes-bya-kun-khyab, 130
 Shes-rab sgron-ma, 225
 Siddārtha, Prince, 7
 siddhi (accomplishment), 103–104
 Siddhiphala (Nāgārjuna), 56
 Śikṣāsamuccaya, 94
 śīla (self-discipline), 18, 20
 Śīlendrabodhi, 87, 140, 151
 Simhabhadra (Seng-ge bZang-po), 185
 Simhajāti, King, 116
 Sim-ha-rā-dza (Simha Rā-ja), 194
 Śītavana, 174, 179
 Six Ornaments of India, 53, 63–68
 Skandhila, 39, 66
 Smṛtijñānakīrti, 149, 165
 So Ye-shes-dbang-phyug, 207–226
 Śobhajāta, King, 116
 bSod-nams-mgon-po, 147
 bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan (Bla-ma-
 dam-pa), 246

- Sog-po dPal-gyi-ye-shes, 205, 207, 234
 Southern Treasures (lho-gter), 261
 Sputārtha, 150
 Śrāmaṇera-varṣāgra-prcchā, 146
 Śrāvakas (Nyan-thos), 29, 30, 91
 Śrāvakayāna, 32, 90, 98, 160
 Śrī Laṅkā, 45, 63
 Śrī Parvata, 59, 64
 Śrī Phala, 64
 Śrī Simha, 171, 174, 180–185, 232–
 233, 238, 239, 241
 Śrīgupta, 33
 Śrījñāna, 146
 Śrīlāta (Srilabdhā, dPal-ldan), 41
 Śrīman (Nāgārjuna), 54
 Srong-btsan-sgam-po, King, 73, 113,
 121, 122, 126, 131–133, 298
 Śrotānugata-nāma-samādhi, 62
 bSrung-ba'i-zhabs (Rakṣitapāda), 165
 Sthaviras, 24
 Sthaviravāda, 28, 29
 Sthiramati, 38, 82, 225
 Śuddhodana, King, 5, 7–9
 Sudhana, 80
 Sudharmā, 175–177
 Suḥṛllekha, 58
 Sukhāvātī, 53, 54, 60, 219–220
 Sukhaprasanna (bDe-ba-gsal-mdzad),
 225
 Sūkṣmadīrgha, 149
 Sukusama-nāma-dvikrama-tattva-
 bhāvanā-mukhāgama-vṛtti, 167
 Summary of Philosophical View-
 points, A, 298
 Śūnyaśrī, 167
 śūnyatā (stong-pa-nyid), 84, 86, 91,
 102
 Śūnyatāsaptati, 58, 91
 Surendrabodhi, 87, 140, 151
 Sūrya-prabhā-samādhi, 63
 Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra, 80
 Svalakṣaṇa (own characteristic), 77
 Svātantrika-Mādhyamika (Rang-rgyud-
 dbu-ma-pa), 92, 96, 101
 T'ai-tsung, 112, 122
 Takṣaśīla, 40
 T'ang Dynasty, 121
 bsTan-bskyong, Pandita, 153
 Tārā (sGrol-ma), 126, 195
 Tāranātha, 86
 Tarkajvālā, 93
 Tarthang Tulku (Dar-thang sPrul-sku,
 Kun-dga' dGe-legs), 290–298
 rTa-ston Jo-'bum, 216
 rTa-ston Jo-yes, 216–218
 Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha-nature),
 16, 80, 82, 98, 101
 Tathāgatagarbha Sūtras, Ten, 101
 Tattvasaṅgraha, 96, 155
 commentary on (pañjikā), 96
 Ṭeṅgipa, 104
 Ten Men of dbUs and gTsang, 143
 gTer-ma, 137, 168–169, 239, 255–
 265, 288
 gTer-stons, 257–265
 thabs-rgyud, 162–163
 Theravādins, 30
 Third Turning, 16, 353
 Thirty-seven Wings of Enlighten-
 ment, 18–23
 Thod-dkar Nam-mkha'-sde, 209
 Tho-ling Monastery, 145, 146
 'Thon-mi Sambhoṭa, 131–132
 three natures (in Yogācāra), 80
 Tibet, *passim*
 geological origins, 127–128
 schools of Buddhism, 145
 Tilopa, 105
 sTod Vinaya lineage, 130, 144–145
 rTogs-dKa'-snang-ba, 153
 rtogs-pa (realization), 32, 69
 trainings, three, 20, 22–23, 160, 325,
 335
 Transmission Tradition (rgyud-sde),
 168
 Trayamiśraṇa-mālā (Lung-ni spel-ma
 gsum-gyi phreng-ba), 39
 Trikāla-parīkṣā, 83

- Trimsika-kārikā-prakaraṇa, 82
 Trimsikavijñapti-bhāṣya, 82
 trisaṃvara, 35
 Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa, 80
 truths,
 Four Noble, 16, 20
 three, 169
 two, 80, 157–157, 165, 169, 339
 rTsa-rlung, 283
 gTsang-nag 'Od-'bar, 218
 gTsang-nag-pa, 156
 gTsang-pa Byi-ston, 218
 bTsan Kha-bo-che, 155
 Tshe-spong-bza' rMa-rgyal mTsho-
 skar-ma, 200–201
 Tshig-don-chen-mo, 243
 Tshul-khrims-rgyal-ba, 86
 Tsong-kha-pa, 83, 102, 147, 149
 gTsug-lag-dpal-dge, 225
 gTsug-ru Rin-chen-gzhon-nu, 196
 Turkestan, 224
 Turks, 49, 51, 114
 Tuṣita Heaven, 4, 62, 63, 80
 Twelve and a Half Happy Genera-
 tions, 140
 Two Most Excellent Ones, 53–63

 Udānavarga, 39
 Udāyibhadra, 42
 Uḍḍiyāna, 134, 165, 170, 175, 186, 195
 Udraka Rāmaputra, 10
 'Ug-pa-lung-pa (Zur-po-che), 210–212
 Ultimate Truth (paramārtha-satya), 80
 Unshakable powers, five, 21
 Upagupta, 31, 36
 Upāli, 17, 27, 39
 Upālipariṣcā-sūtra, 36
 Upā-rā-dza, 194
 Upayoga, 164
 U-rgyan-pa, Mahāsiddha, 245
 Uruvilvā, 16
 Uṣṇiṣavijayā-dhāraṇī, 69
 Uttaratantra (rGyud-bla-ma), 81, 82,
 101, 102, 155, 340

 Vācanamukha, 150
 Vādanyāya, 76
 Vaibhāṣikas (Bye-brag-smra-ba), 39–
 40, 66–68
 Vaidalya-sūtra, 58
 Vairocana (rNam-par sNang-mdzad),
 161, 189
 Vairocanabhadra, 151
 Vairotsana (rNam-par-snang-mdzad),
 196–207, 232–233, 235, 238
 Vaiśālī, 16, 18, 28
 Vaiśeṣika, 92
 Vajrahasya (rDo-rje-bzhad-pa), 225
 Vajra-kīla-rdo-rje-phur-pa, 187
 Vajrakīla (rDo-rje Phur-bu), 220
 maṇḍala, 208
 Sādhana, 188, 196, 209, 215, 289,
 293
 Vajrapāṇi (Phyag-na rDo-rje), 24, 27,
 89, 161, 176, 177, 189–190, 192–
 193, 195, 213, 224, 243, 265
 Vajrasādhu, 242
 Vajrāsana, 10, 58, 73
 Vajrasattva (rDo-rje-sems-dpa'), 161,
 173, 175, 189, 190, 192, 196,
 213, 238, 240, 245
 Vajrāvali (rDo-rje phreng-ba), 118
 Vajravārāhī, 245
 Vajrayāna, xii–xiii, 103, 104, 110,
 160–161
 Vārāṇasī, 15, 16, 49, 51
 Vāsiṣka, King, 36
 Vasubandhu (dByig-gnyen), 33, 41,
 53, 63, 66–70, 77, 82, 87, 89
 Vasudhara, 224, 225
 Vasumitra (dBig-bshes), 36, 37, 39, 51
 Vatsīputriyas, 70
 Vedalya, 54
 Vedic period, 41
 Vibhajyavādins, 28
 Vibhāṣā, 37, 66
 Vidarbha, 53
 Vigataragadhvaja, 89
 Vighravavyāvartanī, 58, 91

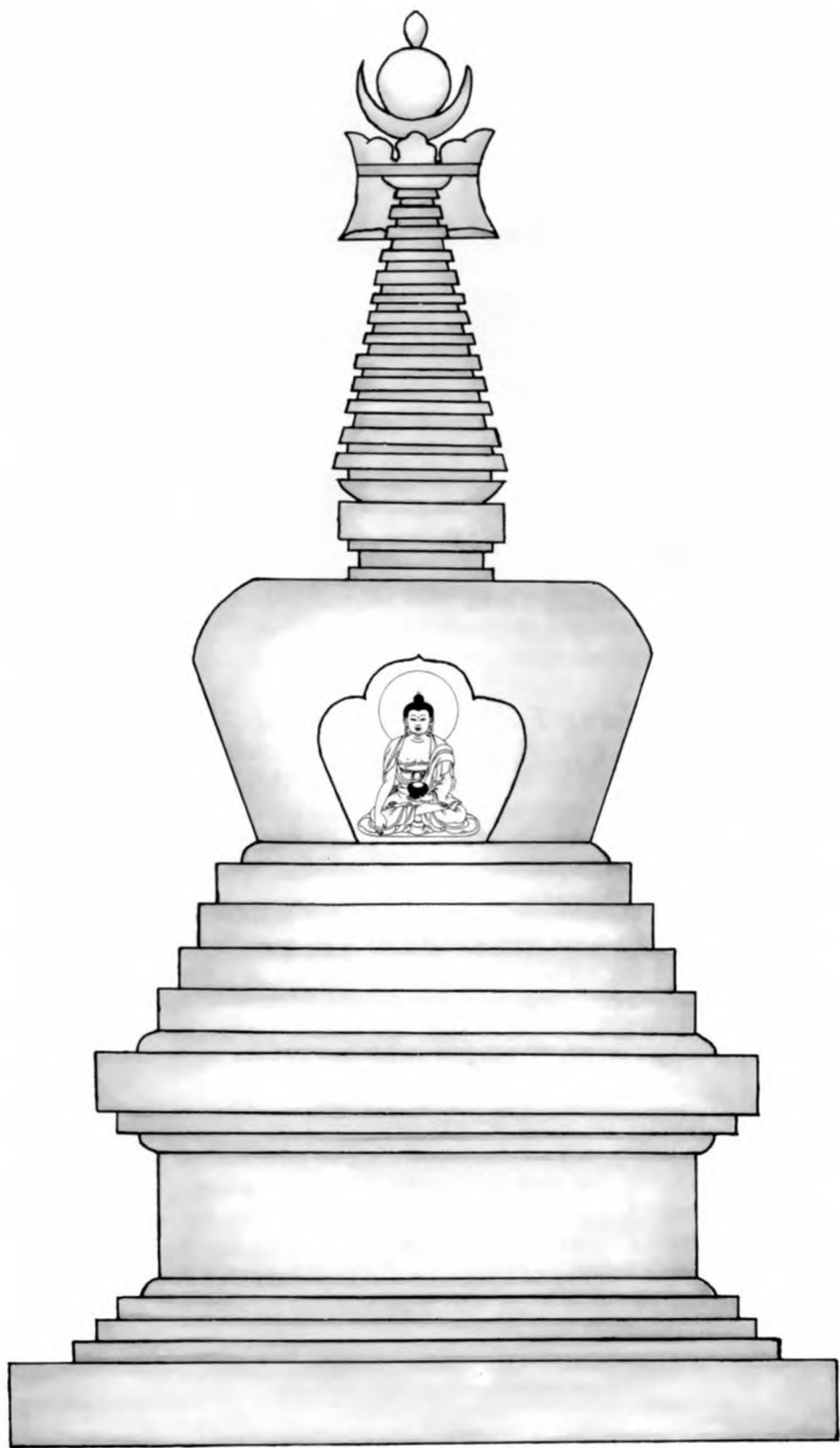
Index

- Vijñānavāda, 70, 80
Vijñaptimatratāsiddhi-śāstra, 83, 351
Vikramaśīla monastery, 78, 97, 112–114, 116
Vimalamitra, 87, 135, 146, 171, 174, 184–188, 191, 195, 196, 202–206, 232, 238, 240–242, 269
Vimalasabhāva (mountain), 27
Vimuktasena, 82
Vīnapa, 105
Vinaya, 27, 32–35, 69, 116, 184
 Mahāyāna, 30, 34–35
 Mūlasarvāstivādin, 30, 36, 77, 130, 140
 Tibetan, 32–33, 130–140
Vinaya-sūtra, 78
Vinitadeva, 83
Vitapāda (Man-zhabs), 167
Vr̥ji Republic, 42, 110
Vulture Peak, 84, 85
Vyavahārasiddhi, 58, 91
- Wheel of the Dharma, Turning of, 16
White Sangha, 140, 144, 227–228
Wu Tse-t'ien (Empress), 122
Wu Ta'i Shan, 180, 187, 242
- gYag Mi-pham Chos-kyi-bla-ma, 153
gYag-ston-pan-chen rDo-rje-dpal, 219
Yang-dag-thugs, 258
Yar-lung, 125
gYas-chen-po Shes-rab-grags, 150
Ya-zi Bon-ston, 232
Yer-pa, 137, 138
Ye-shes bla-ma, 283
Ye-shes gsang-ba, 235
Ye-shes-mdo (Jñānasūtra), 183–185, 238, 240–241
Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal, 54, 206, 227, 257
Ye-shes-'od, 144, 145, 149
Ye-shes-rgya-mtsho, 208, 226
Ye-shes-sde, 86, 87, 149, 151, 152
Yi-dam, 57
- Yid-bzhin rin-po-che'i mdzod, 336–350
gYo dGe-'byung, 140
Yogācāra, 34, 70, 78–83, 91, 98, 337–339
Yogācāra-bhūmi (-śāstra), 82
Yogācāra-mādhyamika-svātantrika, 82, 96–97, 154–157
Yon-tan-bzungs, 216
Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, Khu-lung-pa, 207–208
Yüeh-chih, 49
Yuktiṣaṣṭhikā, 58, 91
gYung-ston-pa (gYung-ston rDo-rje-dpal-bzang), 191–192, 218–219
gYu-sgra sNying-po, rGyal-mo, 143, 187, 204–206, 233
- Zab-mo yang-tig, 248–249
Za-gnam Rin-chen-dbyig, 235
gZer-bu bdun-pa, 241
Zhang-bKra-shis rDo-rje, 242
Zhang-btsun Lo-tsā-ba, 192
Zhang-mkhar-ba bSod-nams-bzang-po, 222
Zhang-rGyal-ba'i-yon-tan, 196
Zhang-zhung rGyal-ba'i-shes-rab, 78, 146
Zhe-chen Kong-sprul (Padma-dri-med-legs-pa'i-blo-gros), 226, 289, 292, 294
Zhe-chen monastery, 273, 276
Zhe-chen Rab-'byams ('Gyur-med Kun-bzang-rnam-rgyal, the Second), 272, 276
Zhe-chen rGyal-tshab, 287–289
Zhi-byed-pa, 222, 244
Zhi-g-po bDud-rtsi, 215–217
Zhi-g-po of dBus, 215, 222
Zhi-g-po-gling-pa (Nam-mkha'-tshe-dbang-rgyal-po), 263
gzhi-rgyud, 162
gZhon-nu-tshul-khrims (sKar-chung-ring-mo), 153

gZhung-don phyogs-bcu'i-mun-sel,
192
gZhon-nu-mchog, 146
Zur Byams-pa-seng-ge, 218–219
Zur-chung-pa (Zur-chung Shes rab-
grags-pa), 209, 212–213

Zur-po-che (lHa-rje Zur-po-che
Śākya-'byung-gnas), 209–212, 219
Zur-rnam-pa-gsum (Three Zur), 209,
226







Tarthang Tulku

*About Tarthang Tulku: A Note from
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The general editor for the Crystal Mirror series is Tarthang Tulku, an accomplished Tibetan lama who has made his home in the United States for the past fifteen years. Since his arrival in India in 1959, Rinpoche has worked with complete dedication for the transmission of the Dharma. As his students, we have learned to find inspiration in his tireless devotion and profound respect for the Dharma.

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